Multimedia • CD-ROM • Edutainment • PC & Mac Games

42 New Game & Multimedia Reviews

E2 Electronic Entertainment™

THE #1 INTERACTIVE ENTERTAINMENT MAGAZINE

FIRST ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

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25 Top Flight Sims

Superfast 4x CD-ROM Drives

An IDG Communications Publication

January 1995
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Don Steinberg offers a quiz on the new game ratings and gets ready for reference titles of, say, Every Guy Named Larry.

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PLANES COURTESY OF MARIS; PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY ANTHONY TJASMAN

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It doesn't take a pilot's license to take off on a flight sim, just a desire to blow fellow flyers to cinders. We separate the aces from the also-rans in the skies above from World War I to the present, and beyond…

61 The Plane Truth
By James Daly

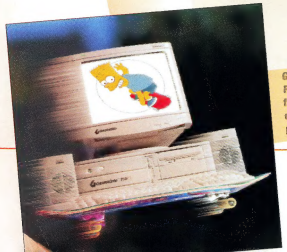
You don't have to fly to love airplanes. This sleek squadron of jet-oriented multimedia titles puts you up close and personal with the fastest, most-powerful flying machines in the world.

66 Brews and Bytes
By James Daly

Head out to the newest high-tech playpens, where you can eat dinner, quaff a beer, and then use computer hookups to schmooze with new friends in far-away places or play high-tech games with your neighbors.

73 Under a Killing Moon
By Christopher Lindquist

Hard-boiled gumshoe Tex Murphy is back. Take an advance look at the funny, futuristic cases he has to crack—with help from actors like Brian Keith, Margot Kidder, Russel Means, and the voice of James Earl Jones.



Gateway 2000's P5-60 Pentium is fast, but watch out for the bumps, page 22.

Even Frank Lloyd Wright himself would have appreciated this disc, page 31.

PC GAMES™

Plus Macintosh, 3DO, CD-i, and Sega CD games

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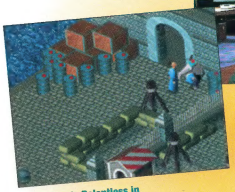
It's not easy being President in CyberJudas, page 100.



The action is Relentless in Electronic Arts' latest, page 86.

Colonization lets you conquer the New World, page 82.

Electronic Entertainment

VOLUME 2, NUMBER 1

Tech Shop

120 Faster Is Always Better

When it comes to CD-ROM drives, the need for speed is unquenchable. Take a look at four quadruple-speed disc spinners.

122 Inside MPEG

M-what? Check out the video-compression technology that's finally making PC movies look as good as TV.

124 S.O.S.

A pooped Performa, printer problems, and the price of parity are some of the alliterative puzzlers popping up in this month's mailbag.

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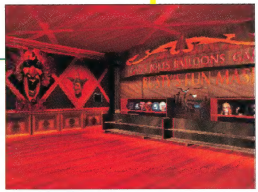

Clown around in our Guided Tour of Under a Killing Moon, page 73.

January 1995

Editor's Page

Fredric Paul

Paper Anniversary

It's been quite a year. Since *Electronic Entertainment* threw its landmark launch party in December of 1993, we've grown, changed, and evolved right along with the industry we cover.

When we started, we wondered if the world was ready for the heady mix of computer games, multimedia entertainment, and advanced gaming platforms we saw coalescing into a new industry. But as we watched everyone from movie execs to multimedia mavens file excitedly into San Francisco's Spectrum Gallery for the bash, we knew we were on the cusp of something even bigger than we expected.

The success of E^2's first 12 issues has justified the initial buzz. In a single year, we've watched as the rise of interactive CD-ROM-based multimedia made personal computers into the newest form of mainstream entertainment.

Our first dozen issues covered everything from edutainment to cybersex. We chronicled the incredible improvements in computer games. We tracked the early rumblings of interactive music, and introduced you to the people behind Sillywood—the convergence of Silicon Valley and Hollywood. We've taken you to virtual-reality parlors and shown you how to create virtual worlds at home. And we were right there as companies spent billions of dollars chasing the elusive promise of interactive television and high-end CD-ROM-based gaming systems.

In retrospect, our timing was perfect. Had we waited, we'd still be getting our bearings and making beginner's mistakes. Instead, we've refined our approach based on our experience. For instance, you've probably already noticed the new logo on the cover. Created by art director Kathy Marty and designer Anthony Lukban, it's intended to convey the excitement and energy of the products and technology we cover.

Another improvement adds easy-to-read five-star ratings to multimedia reviews throughout the magazine. And in the PC Games section—which still includes games for Macs, 3DO, Sega CD, and CD-i machines—we've redesigned our ratings boxes to deliver more information.

Despite the changes, though, E^2 retains its basic mission: Deliver honest reviews of new computer games, multimedia titles, and hardware; serve up savvy tips and hints; offer thought-provoking opinions; and present fascinating insights about the cutting edge of interactive-entertainment technology.

In this issue, for instance, you'll see coverage of flight sims and aviation programs, a Guided Tour of Under a Killing Moon, a look at ultra-fast CD-ROM drives, an explanation of MPEG video, and even a virtual visit to the new cyberbars, where the digerati meet to eat, drink, play, and communicate. In upcoming issues, look for stories on easy-to-use all-in-one PCs, network games, computer golf, digital fiction, and our annual Editor's Choice Awards.

So, what do you think? Write to us—via e-mail, fax, or plain old U.S. snail mail—and tell us your opinion of E^2, interactive entertainment, and whatever else is on your mind (our addresses are at the bottom of page 6). We want to hear from you.

FP

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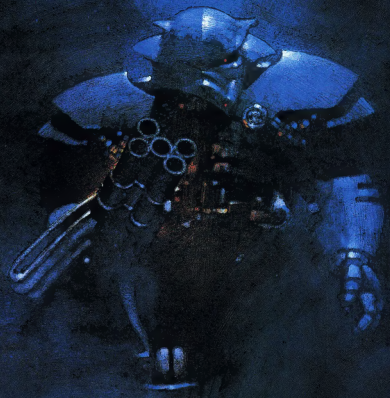

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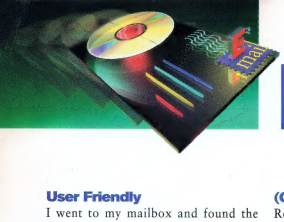

Letters

User Friendly

I went to my mailbox and found the *Enterprise* staring me in the face; I felt my day had been made.

After reading the *Star Trek* feature ("Explore The Enterprise," November 1994, page 54), I turned back to the beginning of the magazine. I didn't even get past the letter page before writing you.

In a response to a reader you wrote, "And speaking of sound effects, we hear you. Starting next month, we'll add a Sound Check rating to every game review." This is good, but not exactly fair.

Millions of people in the United States today use Closed Captioning to enjoy television. The hearing impaired, of which I am one, have no choice but to use CC to enjoy many types of entertainment.

To my knowledge, Sierra On-Line is the only company that included text in their games, removed it, and then decided to put it back to help hearing-impaired individuals. Maybe this is why Sierra is one of the top game producers in the country. The company looks beyond trends and provides experiences for all gamers.

It is bad business on the part of Virgin to say that they are going add text to The 11th Hour, and then not follow through. The disabled are a powerful wallet to ignore since a large percentage of America has a disability of some sort. In addition, the disabled are often the first people to embrace emerging technology. Many have computers, and several state governments provide computers to help people with disabilities.

I'm not saying you should drop the sound ratings, but could you also add a Text Option box? I don't want to buy a new CD find it has no text, and not be able to return it.

Scott E. Johnston
Via America Online

Thank you for raising this important issue. While we can't include an option box for every feature in the games we review, we will make every effort to mention if a game depends on sound to be playable. —Ed.

ILLUSTRATION BY PAUL WILEY

(Computer) Men Are Pigs

Regarding your feature "Why Women Don't Play Computer Games" (September 1994, page 56), maybe the real solution to getting women into games is for every household to have two computers. That way the men in the house could still hog one system while mothers and daughters experimented with the other.

I agree with Laurie Strand of Brøderbund Software when she states, "Women view computers as tools, men view them as toys." Maybe the reason is that most women have two jobs: They have a career and they have a home to run. I have heard women comment that SimCity and Myst look like great games, but they don't have the time to get hooked on them.

Lorna Farnol
San Francisco, California

Outhouse? Compost?

Way to tell it like it is about Outpost in your November 1994 issue (page 86). I really got a kick out of John Sauer's lead, "Did you say 'Outhouse'? 'Compost'?"

Too bad that the people who bought the game didn't get a chance to read the manual before they left the store. The manual's introduction practically admits that the game is incomplete when it says developing a game is like raising a child—at some point, you just have to put aside your own dreams and let them go.

It looks like Sierra should go back to child-rearing camp. Keep up the straight talk.

Dan W. Davies
Salt Lake City, Utah

Computer Ease, Not Computerese

I found your Tech Shop feature "What's in a Game?" (October 1994, page 102) very informative. Prior to reading it, I was not well versed on the litany of terms thrown around by gamers. I feel much more comfortable cracking the obscure descriptions of games often found within the pages of many magazines and on game packaging. The more I read your magazine, the more I see how complex games are becoming. It's nice to find articles that help make sense of all the changes in plain English.

I hope future issues have the same type of informative pieces that are not just geared toward the highly computer literate.

Douglas Moffet
San Francisco, California

Director's Chair

I'm a big movie fan who has always loved making up different endings for movies. So when I discovered interactive movies for the computer—in which the player determines how the story unfolds by making different choices at various decision points—I knew I would love this type of game.

Are these games being produced now and what titles are available? Also, what do they cost and where can I find them?

Beatrice Donovan
Address withheld

Hyperbole Studios of Seattle, Mechadeus in San Francisco, and Trilobyte of Medford, Oregon, all specialize in cinematic adventure games, such as Quantum Gate, Critical Path, The Daedalus Encounter, The 7th Guest, and The 11th Hour. They all feature live actors, sophisticated production techniques, and multiple endings. Buy them at any software store for between $50 and $100. —Ed.

Whoops!

In our review of Tune 1000's Soft Karaoke for Windows ("Computer Karaoke," October 1994, page 34), we printed an incorrect number for the company's order line. Those who want to croon like the King in the Heartbreak Hotel should call 800-363-8863.

Got something you want to get off your chest? Do it! Write, fax, or e-mail us at: Letters to the Editor, c/o Electronic Entertainment, *951 Mariner's Island Blvd., Suite 700, San Mateo, CA 94404; fax: 415-349-7781; MCI ID: 619-7340; and CompuServe: 73361, 265.*

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SHARP EDGE

A Playboy babe to keep you company.

Sex and Toads and Rock 'n' Roll

Looking for screen art guaranteed to offend half the people you know–but keep the other half constantly coming back to visit? Then take a peek at the **MTV's Beavis and Butt-head Multimedia Screen Saver** and **Playboy Multimedia Screen Saver** from Sony Imagesoft.

Beavis and Butt-head forces your computer to relax through the soothing refrains of videos by the likes of Prong and Alice Cooper, or recoil in terror from more than 80 video clips of the antisocial adventures of MTV's favorite cartoon characters.

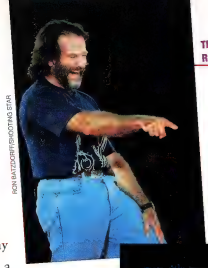
If you're into more adult entertainment, the Playboy screen saver lets you script together dozens of still and video images from the archives of America's favorite "men's entertainment" magazine. Go as bare as you dare, from bikini shots to nothing but nude. But if you value your reputation with co-workers, you'd better keep this pair of screen savers at home. (Sony Imagesoft; 800-922-7669; not yet priced)

–Christopher Lindquist

Platform: Win CD
Ship date: January

Whether your tastes run to beach bunnies or Butt-heads, there's a screen saver to suit your desires.

Digital Yucks



ROBIN WILLIAMS IS FRIGHTENING STAR

The very hairy Robin Williams.

Wander through the world of stand-up comedy.

Tickle your funny bone and get a backstage look at stand-up comics with **Comedians,** from Magnet-Interactive Studios. Comedians, which is based on the book by Arthur Grace, is likely to feature shtick from the best in the business: Robin Williams, Steven Wright, and Whoopi Goldberg, along with other chuckleheads. The disc lets you explore the inside of a 3-D comedy club or catch videos of comic routines. In the bathroom, for example, click on the condom machine to trigger a video routine that finishes with a racy joke or wander backstage for interviews with the stars and their managers. (Magnet Interactive Studios; 202-625-1111; $50)

—Bill Meyer

Platform: Win CD, Mac CD
Ship date: February

Toon Town

Explore the the many facets of animation, from primitive scribbles to international success.

It's a long way from scribbling on your book covers in grade school to creating the next Doonesbury, but if you're an aspiring cartoonist hankering for some inspiration check out **The Multimedia Cartoon Studio,** from Byron Preiss Multimedia. The CD includes a Cartoon Kit with which Gary Larson wannabes can assemble drawings using predrawn parts. A Learn to Cartoon section also offers dozens of tips for creating cartoons from scratch. If your artistic muse hits a dry patch, check out more than 350 color cartoons by such artists as Bob Mankoff, Mick Stevens, and Jack Ziegler–all regular contributors to the *New Yorker* and the *Wall Street Journal.* Don't have an artistic bone in your body? Then cheat a little and pull up more than 60 fully animated cartoons for your multimedia presentations. The disc also includes six cartoon screen savers designed to satisfy those who just can't get enough 'toon time. (Time Warner Interactive; 800-482-3766; $59.95)

–James Daly

First stop for a budding Gary Trudeau.

Platform: Win CD, Mac CD
Ship date: January

Twist and Shout

Even the coolest video can become a snore-fest once you've seen it for the gazillionth time. Or you can jump into the director's chair and scramble your own videos with **Gumbovision**, a funky editing tool from Troon. Get ready for On The Charts: I.R.S. Records 1979–1994, which includes crisp pop videos from the Go-Go's, Fine Young Cannibals, Concrete Blonde, and R.E.M, among others. Pop them on, crank them up and then give 'em a kick in the pants with editing tools like Whip, Smear, Spread, Flavor, and Bake. (Troon; 310-394-3946; $30) *—James Daly*

Platform: Win CD, Mac CD
Ship date: January

Get gone-gone with Belinda Carlisle of the Go-Go's and Gumbovision.

Hi Ya, Maya

Are your kids feeling up to a bicycle trip through Mexico, Guatemala, Belize, and Honduras? Don't worry if it sounds strenuous; the only equipment they'll need for this long journey is a modem. In February, logging into Prodigy or the Internet will let kids–and adventurous adults–take part in **MayaQuest**, a three-month bicycle expedition designed to solve the mysterious decline of the great Mayan civilization during the ninth century.

Adventurer-bicyclist Dan Buettner and his brother Steve, along with bicycling anthropologists and a photographer, will base their expedition on what the people logging into Prodigy vote for.

Along the way Buettner and company will update Prodigy users on their progress and ask what to do next–consult a Mayan expert, undertake a dig, or decipher some hieroglyphs. When MayaQuest is finished, MECC will use the team's video and photographs to produce a learning adventure game. Look for the MayaQuest CD in the fall of '95. (MECC; 800-685-6322; not yet priced) *–Christine Grech*

Platform: Win CD, Mac CD
Ship date: Fall '95

Join adventurer Dan Buettner in MayaQuest.

Meet the descendants of the great Mayan civilization.

A Keyboard That Talks Back

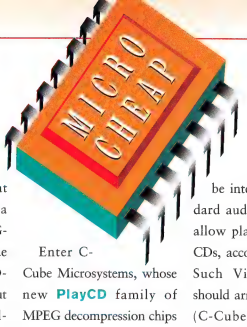
Your desktop is already cluttered with a CPU, monitor, keyboard, mouse, software, and who knows what else. So where do you put your multimedia speakers? Some companies attach them to the monitor; others to the CPU case. But Maxi Switch has teamed up with speaker maker Altec Lansing to put stereo sound literally at your fingertips.

The new **Maxi Sound** keyboard has been lengthened and deepened to accommodate a pair of Altec Lansing high-fidelity stereo speakers. The sound is well directed, since you're usually facing the keyboard, and the handy vertical slide volume control makes it easy to adjust without interrupting a furious round of Doom. Just below the space bar, an omni-directional microphone lets you speak naturally as you type. Just as important, the Maxi Sound uses a single cable for the keyboard, speaker, and microphone connections. (Maxi Switch; 602-746-9378; $99) *–Bill Meyer*

Platform: PC
Ship date: January

The Maxi Sound keyboard includes built-in speakers.

Video A-Go-Go



NEWSFLASH

■ Everyone wants something for nothing, but finding valuable things free on the Internet can take hours. Now Internet users can skip the boring research and go straight to the loot with **Free $tuff on the Internet.** The guide delivers step-by-step instructions on how to get thousands of dollars worth of valuable goodies—from free samples of your favorite coffee to a picture from the Hubble telescope. (The Coriolis Group; 800-410-0192; $19.99)

■ Rock and rollers are going gaga over multimedia. Keep your eyes peeled for an upcoming screen saver featuring **The Grateful Dead,** due in the first quarter of '95. (Jacob Multimedia; 415-922-4897; Windows/Mac; $40)

Cool rockin' Deadhead.

■ **Interactive Network** (See "Game Show," October 1994, page 52) is delaying the national launch of its subscription-based play-along television service until early this year. The company, based in San Jose, California, had originally planned to expand to some two dozen markets last fall, but it fell on tough financial times. However, in late September IN officials said that two of its investors, General Electric's NBC and Tele-Communications, along with new partners Motorola and Sprint, had ponied up more than $25 million in additional financing. (Interactive

continued on page 14

There's no denying that games and multimedia titles that use MPEG-compressed video beat the standard tiny, jerky CD-ROM videos by a mile. But to get full-screen, full-motion video, you'll still have to pay almost $400 for the necessary MPEG decompression hardware—such as Sigma Designs' ReelMagic card.

Enter C-Cube Microsystems, whose new **PlayCD** family of MPEG decompression chips perform as well for as much as 30 percent less than other MPEG add-in cards for PCs. The new chips could even be integrated into standard audio CD players to allow playback of Video-CDs, according to C-Cube. Such VideoCD players should arrive within weeks. (C-Cube Microsystems; 408-944-6300)

—Christopher Lindquist

ILLUSTRATION BY ANTHONY LEVANDOWSKI

Reach Out and Touch Someone

Even the slickest virtual-reality setups leave out an essential element of human experience: touch. You can see and hear, but there's no way to reach out and touch someone.

The Phantom can add tactile sensations to your virtual world.

But one new force-reflecting technology called the **Phantom Haptic Interface** promises to change that. Developed by MIT graduate student Thomas Massie, the Phantom looks more like a dentist's X-ray machine than a VR tool. The guts consist of two mechanical arms with a swiveling thimble at the end of each appendage. Place your thumb and forefinger in the thimbles, and you can feel, manipulate, and bump into objects displayed onscreen.

The computer is programmed to reflect the application of varying degrees of force. If you touch an onscreen object at a certain force, the Phantom relays a corresponding reflection of pressure back to your hand. The system could duplicate the feeling of anything from pitching a fastball to firing a shotgun at overanxious aliens.

No official Phantom games are yet in the works, but in the next few years Massie plans to develop a model for home use.

–Bill Meyer

Scouring the 'Net

One of the Internet's many Catch-22s is that although there's plenty of information, you have to know where to find it. So it's worth finding your way to **WEBster,** a new biweekly electronic magazine focusing on 'Net news. The first issue has a review of the Mosaic 'Net interface, an interview with Internet patriarch Vinton Cerf, and "The Fringe," featuring offbeat stories on the multimedia shrine to Elvis and the online campaign against a certain smarmy purple dinosaur. The first half dozen issues are free; then it's $29 a year. (Taber-Griffin; 800-795-4472, tgc.com; $29 a year) *–Bill Meyer*

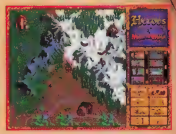
Platform: PC/Mac
Ship date: January

Let WEBster help you make your way through the confusing tangle of the Internet.

HEROES of Might and Magic

The realms of Might and Magic are expanding! New lands have been discovered, and you must vie for their control against three other warlords. Now is the time to summon your heroes, recruit your armies and lead them to victory. Control every resource in your empire from your castles, docks and guilds to your archers, dragons and ogres. Keep a level head and an iron fist as you strive for total domination in the world of **Heroes of Might and Magic.**

- *Over two dozen different monster types*
- *Customizable computer opponents*
- *Dynamic musical score*
- *Intuitive point-n-click interface*
- *Exquisite SVGA Graphics*
- *Indefinitely replayable*



Available at your local software retailer or order direct from New World Computing at 1-800-325-8898 (818-889-6070 outside the U.S.), or by mail: P.O. Box 4302 Hollywood, CA 90078-4302

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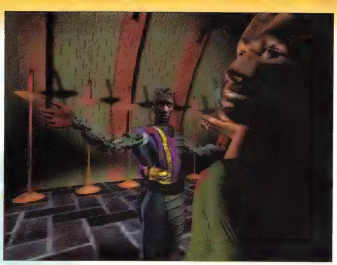
© 1994 New World Computing, Inc. Heroes of Might and Magic is a trademark of New World Computing. New World Computing and its distinctive logo and Might and Magic are registered trademarks of New World Computing, Inc. All rights reserved. IBM screens shown. Actual screens may vary.



Star Talk with Grace Jones

Grace Jones, the angular diva who made flat-top haircuts sexy, makes her CD-ROM debut in Take 2 Interactive's new game Hell. The Jamaican-born actress, singer, and model portrays Solene Solux, the corrupt, androgynous leader of the Powerful Hand of God party in the year 2095. Electronic Entertainment *contributing editor Don Steinberg caught up with Jones in a New York studio as she belted out some final audio tracks for the game—including a bit of evil laughter.*

E²: Are you into high tech?

Grace Jones: I'm getting into it. I'm starting to do a lot with computers. Right now I'm working on putting my face into cartoons, into comic-book characters. You can take a photo, you can strip the background out, put a different background in.

E²: So you have a pretty good computer at home?

GJ: Not at home. I go to Kinko's. Like, the other night I was up until six in the morning at Kinko's, working on taking different shots of my face and stripping it into, like, Prince Valiant. Just really having fun with it.

E²: Tell me about your role in Hell.

GJ: I play the Imperator. I speak against evil, but I am evil. I am God and Satan at the same time. It's been very fun. The whole story is very interesting. Cyber, virtual hell.

E²: Have you ever played a character this evil before?

GJ: Oh yeah. Most of my roles.

E²: But wait—weren't you a good guy in Conan the Destroyer?

GJ: I was the good guy. But I still kicked ass.

E²: Hell is interactive, and since you're evil in it, a player must be able to fight you...

GJ: Yeah!

E²: Cool. Can they, uh, kill you?

GJ: Oh yeah, sure.

E²: Wow. So what do you do for an encore?

GJ: They made Mario Brothers into a film. Now they're making Mortal Kombat and Street Fighter into movies. It's the normal way things are going. You know that the kids who are playing the game are going to see the movie.

E²: So you're thinking Hell might someday become a film?

GJ: It could...yeah. I mean...[she lowers her voice] I've thought of that possibility.

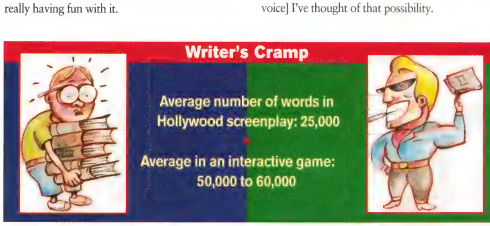


ILLUSTRATION BY ANTHONY LUONG

NEWSFLASH

from page 12

Network; 800-544-2900)

■ Sanyo Electric says that it has developed a "quadruple" **high-density CD-ROM** technology capable of storing a full-length movie on a single disc. The new technology will let Sanyo produce a standard CD capable of playing back 135 minutes of digital motion pictures. The current crop of CDs can store only about 74 minutes' worth of video. The new discs will have storage capacity of 2.5 gigabytes. The company says that it hopes to bring the discs to market by 1996. There's only one catch: They may not be compatible with existing CD-ROM technology. (Sanyo; 818-998 7322; not yet priced)

■ German- and French-speaking CompuServe users can now converse with English speakers—more or less—in the MacCIM forum, thanks to a **multilingual machine translation.** Messages are picked up from the forum hourly and translated at a rate of up to 1,800 words per minute. Turnaround time depends on the number of messages to be translated, but currently it's only a few minutes, CompuServe says. (CompuServe; 800-848-8799; PC/Mac, included in basic service)

■ Warner Books and Time Warner Interactive say that they are joining forces for the simultaneous creation and release of a CD-ROM game and novel. **Mirage**—the story of twin sisters reunited in virtual reality—is being written by F. Paul Wilson, author of *The Select,* and Matthew J. Costello, novelist and writer of the top-selling CD-ROM game The 7th Guest. The project is scheduled for fall 1995 release. (Time Warner Interactive; 800-

continued on page 16

Ride like a maniac. Without becoming a kidney donor.

Talk about insane. We packed Cyclemania with over 400MB of treacherous road footage, put it on a CD-ROM and threw you in the middle of it all. You've got six screaming bikes to choose from and tons of obstacles like rocks, oncoming traffic, road pylons and guardrails to contend with. There are even different race and opposition levels to choose from. And when it comes to graphics, Cyclemania is about as advanced as it gets. We have technology that can actually scroll real road footage and synchronize it to the speed of your bike. Which, by the way, can reach 160 MPH. (Watch out for cows.) As *Computer Game Review* puts it: "From a technical standpoint, this game is a winner. The digitized road footage looks stunning." In other words, it's as real as racing gets. Without that annoying death part.

CYCLEMANIA™

A RACING GAME BY SPORT ACCOLADE

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NEWSFLASH

from page 14

482-3766; not yet priced)

■ A retrospective about the creation and social impact of Washington D.C.'s eloquent Vietnam War Memorial is due in early '95 from Magnet Interactive. **The Wall: A Living Memorial** will explore the personal stories of some of the more than 50,000 American soldiers lost in the Vietnam conflict–and of the families that mourn them. The title will bring together a 3-D model and still and video images of the wall, a database of the names etched into its glossy black marble, and images of the mementos left at the site, and personal items from families, friends, and surviving comrades. (Magnet Interactive; 202-625-1111; Win CD/Mac CD, street price $40)

The Wall examines America's most stirring war memorial.

■ Heavy-metal mavens **Cinderella** recently completed an audition for a new drummer, but only the computer savvy needed apply. Auditions were held on the CompuServe network, where would-be bongo beaters could download a 30-second sample of "Gypsy Road," a song from the band's *Long Cold Winter* album. After adding their own stick work, they sent a .WAV file back, where band members gave it the once over. The grand-prize winner will be flown to Cinderella's studio in Philadelphia for a live audition.

Struck Out

Last spring, when the prospect of a strike seemed no more threatening than hiccups, we asked three computer baseball games to predict the outcome of the 1994 season ("Batter Up," April 1994, page 46). We ran a simulated season to see how accurately Strategic Simulations' **Tony La Russa Baseball II, Microleague Baseball 4**, and **Lance Haffner Full Count Electronic Baseball** could model the real world. Sadly, all of the predictions were nullified by a season cut short by greed.

Nevertheless, we promised to come back and compare how well each game did. Even without the strike, their predictions were on pretty shaky ground. All three programs correctly named the White Sox as a division winner, but the only other correct call was Lance Haffner's confidence in the Expos, who set the best record in baseball. On the other hand, that program also had the Yankees—finishing well below .500. (Tony La Russa Baseball II; Strategic Simulations; 800-245-4525; DOS, $59.95; CD for DOS, $80. Microleague Baseball 4; Microleague Interactive Software; 800-334-6572; DOS, $19.95. Lance Haffner Full Count Baseball; Lance Haffner Games; 800-477-7032; DOS, $39.95) —*Fredric Paul*

Team	Actual	Tony La Russa Baseball II	Microleague Baseball 4	Lance Haffner Full Count
NATIONAL LEAGUE				
East Division				
Montreal	.649	.531	.549	.574
Atlanta	.596	.599	.605	.562
New York	.487	.494	.444	.444
Philadelphia	.470	.593	.543	.543
Florida	.443	.414	.401	.457
Central Division				
Cincinnati	.579	.438	.481	.494
Houston	.574	.537	.494	.525
Pittsburgh	.465	.444	.488	.518
St. Louis	.465	.543	.556	.543
Chicago	.434	.519	.519	.488
West Division				
Los Angeles	.509	.488	.463	.481
San Francisco	.478	.593	.549	.555
Colorado	.453	.432	.457	.432
San Diego	.402	.377	.451	.395
AMERICAN LEAGUE				
East Division				
New York	.619	.556	.525	.469
Baltimore	.563	.562	.463	.549
Toronto	.478	.574	.562	.568
Boston	.470	.531	.481	.562
Detroit	.465	.506	.475	.488
Central Division				
Chicago	.593	.567	.567	.586
Cleveland	.584	.494	.500	.370
Kansas City	.557	.494	.531	.494
Minnesota	.469	.395	.494	.494
Milwaukee	.461	.426	.379	.518
West Division				
Texas	.456	.519	.531	.444
Oakland	.447	.444	.457	.407
Seattle	.438	.469	.519	.518
California	.409	.463	.469	.537

On the Wings of a Virtual Angel

Angel Studios promises to add a colorful edge to home computer games.

Fans of the spectacular graphics in the movie *The Lawnmower Man* and in Peter Gabriel's "Kiss That Frog" video take notice: Angel Studios, the company behind those awesome eye-catchers, has gone interactive. While Angel has been demonstrating its high-end VR games at trade shows, the slick effects are running on Silicon Graphics hardware costing upward of $250,000. To bring this big-ticket fun to the people, Angel plans to set up its software at theme parks and entertainment centers. It's reportedly working on lower-end games for home entertainment within reach of more modest pocketbooks, too. (Angel Studios; 619-929-0700) *–Christopher Lindquist*

Platform: Windows, Mac
Ship date: End of 1995

READYSOFT INCORPORATED & EPICENTER INTERACTIVE PRESENT

DON BLUTH'S

SPACE ACE

The evil Commander Borf has kidnapped Ace's girlfriend, the beautiful Kimberly, and is plotting to enslave the Earth by means of his dreaded "Infanto Ray", a weapon that changes everyone it blasts into a helpless baby.

Armed only with a laser gun, Ace must seek out and destroy the Infanto Ray, rescue Kimberly and save the Earth. All in a day's work for a superhero, right?

Featuring full screen animation and crisp, powerful sound from the original laser disc arcade classic, Space Ace plunges you into intense, non-stop action. The fate of Earth is in your hands.

NYR™ Not Yet Rated

PC CD-ROM

MAC CD-ROM

REALmagic INTERACTIVE READY

3DO

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Leader Board

The best-selling PC, Mac, and CD-ROM entertainment software

Falcon Gold Flight Simulator lands the No. 9 spot for both PC Games and CD-ROM Titles this month.

Links Pro, featuring photo-realistic courses and players, hits No. 4 (Fore!) on the Mac chart.

Daryl F. Gates' Police Quest: Open Season reports for duty in the No. 10 position on the list of best-selling CD-ROM titles.

The Leader Board is a compilation of top-selling software in 1,300 retail stores for August, 1994. Some titles may appear in more than one category. Source: PC Data.

PC GAMES

1 **TIE Fighter** In this *Star Wars* adventure, you no longer fight for Luke and the rebels. This time, you're out to do Darth Vader's bidding. It's No. 1 for the second month in a row. (LucasArts Entertainment; 800-782-7927; DOS, $63.95)

2 **Myst** Stunning visuals, haunting audio, and logical solutions will keep this revolutionary game on your play list. (Broderbund Software; 800-521-6263; Win CD, $59.95)

3 **Outpost** Sierra's space-survival simulation is selling well despite some nagging bugs and missing features. (Sierra On-Line; 800-757-7707; Windows/Win CD, $69.95)

4 **5 ft. 10 Pak** A bargain-priced, ten-disc compilation of games and multimedia titles, including Doom, Episode 1; King's Quest V; Time Man of the Year; and World FactBook. (Sirius Publishing; 800-247-0307; DOS CD/Win CD, $40)

5 **SimCity 2000** Build a city of the future with this improved version of the classic urban simulation game. (Maxis; 800-336-2947; DOS/Windows, $54.95)

6 **The 7th Guest** The ghost of Henry Stauf just won't go away in this realistic and haunting drama. It's been on the board for more than a year. (Virgin Interactive Entertainment; 800-874-4607; DOS CD, $99.99)

7 **Rebel Assault** Intense 3-D graphics and furious action highlight this *Star Wars* adventure. (LucasArts Entertainment; 800-782-7927; DOS CD, $63.95)

8 **Microsoft Flight Simulator 5.0** Upgraded graphics and new features keep this hugely popular flight sim soaring high. (Microsoft; 800-426-9400; DOS, $64.95)

9 **Falcon Gold Flight Simulator** Spectrum HoloByte's Electronic Battlefield series on one disc, including Falcon 3.0, MiG 29, and Hornet Naval Strike Fighter. (Spectrum HoloByte; 800-695-4263; DOS CD, $69.95)

10 **X-Wing** Help the rebels defeat the Empire in this space-flight simulator enhanced with extensive *Star Wars* film footage. (LucasArts Entertainment; 800-782-7927; DOS, $55.95)

MAC GAMES

1 **Myst** Stunning visuals, haunting audio, and logical solutions keep this revolutionary game on your play list, enjoying its tenth month on the board. (Broderbund Software; 800-521-6263; Mac CD, $59.95)

2 **SimCity 2000** Build your city of the future with this improved version of the classic urban simulation game. After nine months it is still one of the top Mac games. (Maxis; 800-336-2947; Mac, $54.95)

3 **Rebel Assault** Intense 3-D graphics and action highlight this *Star Wars* adventure. (LucasArts Entertainment; 800-782-7927; Mac CD, $63.95)

4 **Links Pro** Photo-realistic courses and players as well as humorous sound bites highlight this groundbreaking golf game. (Access Software; 800-793-0073; Mac, $49.95)

5 **Castles: Siege & Conquest** Build castles, protect your fortifications and citizens, and play master of the realm in this medieval simulation. (Interplay Productions; 800-969-4263; Mac, street price $40)

CD-ROM TITLES

1 **Myst** Stunning visuals, haunting audio, and logical solutions will keep this revolutionary game on your play list. (Broderbund Software; 800-521-6263; Win CD/Mac CD, $59.95)

2 **Outpost** Sierra's space-survival simulator is selling well despite nagging bugs and missing features. (Sierra On-Line; 800-757-7707; Win CD, $69.95)

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5 **The 7th Guest** The ghost of Henry Stauf just won't go away in this realistic and haunting drama. (Virgin Interactive Entertainment; 800-874-4607; DOS CD/Mac CD/CD-i, $99.99)

6 **Microsoft Encarta** Experience the world through video segments, audio clips, animation, and text in this high-tech encyclopedia. (Microsoft; 800-426-9400; Win CD/Mac CD, $139)

7 **Corel Gallery** Ten thousand pieces of professional clip art on a single CD. (Corel; 800-772-6735; Win CD/Mac CD, $59)

8 **Microsoft Bookshelf** A complete set of digital references, including *American Heritage Dictionary*, *Columbia Book of Quotations*, and *Original Roget's Thesaurus of Words and Phrases*. (Microsoft; 800-426-9400; Win CD/Mac CD, $69.95)

9 **Falcon Gold Flight Simulator** Spectrum HoloByte's Electronic Battlefield series on one disc, including Falcon 3.0, MiG 29, and Hornet Naval Strike Fighter. (Spectrum HoloByte; 800-695-4263; DOS CD, $69.95)

10 **Police Quest: Open Season** Join former Los Angeles chief of police Daryl F. Gates on a hunt for a psychotic killer on the mean streets of LA. (Sierra On-Line; 800-757-7707; DOS CD, $54.95)

MERCY is a human trait.

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Where nothing is human, mercy is a foreign concept. At Electrocorp, the largest manufacturer of military and industrial robots, there are no humans. And when an evil virus infects, the robots begin their grisly uprising. There is only one way to end the rampant evil: send in an eliminator. You are selected. You are the Cyborg. You must destroy six robots, each equipped with more superior battle skills than the next. When the robots rise, there can be no mercy.

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CD-ROM

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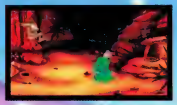


KING'S QUEST

THE PRINCELESS BRIDE

SIERRA

Spotlight

GATEWAY TO MULTIMEDIA

The Lights Are On, But No One's Home

Gateway 2000's dramatic growth from small-time clone maker to big-time PC vendor is certainly impressive. But that success has brought growing pains, and the company appears to be passing some of the twinges on to its customers.

Gateway's P5-60 desktop system has all the components to qualify for high-end multimedia status—a 60MHz Pentium processor, a NEC double-speed CD-ROM drive, passable Altec Lansing speakers (with an AC adapter), a crisp 15-inch Super VGA monitor, a 16-bit Sound Blaster-compatible sound card, a Cardinal 14.4-Kbps fax/modem, a 730MB hard drive, 8MB RAM, a 32-bit PCI local-bus graphics accelerator, an all-Microsoft bundle of multimedia titles and games, and even a cool-looking case. And all for less than $2,500!

Gateway 2000's slick P5-60 multimedia PC has some hidden flaws.

PHOTOGRAPH BY WEINBERG & CO./ARK

Unfortunately, some glitches arrived in the package, too. If you encounter them (as we did) don't look for help from Gateway's tech support. No one ever seems to answer the phones.

The first problem concerned available memory. Even after running DOS's MemMaker, the machine coughed up just 552KB of free conventional RAM when using expanded memory. (The total jumps to around 600KB using only extended memory.) To get many games to run, you'll have to tweak the CONFIG.SYS and AUTOEXEC.BAT files. Groan. Removing device drivers for the programmable keyboard and laptop PC communications software frees up a little more space for your memory-hungry titles.

The sound card caused even bigger problems. Gateway's 16-bit sound card sings under Windows, but mysteriously clams up when you exit to DOS. The sound will work in DOS only if you haven't loaded Windows first. Since the system comes preconfigured to run Windows immediately on start-up, guess what…more tweaking.

Our calls to Gateway's technical support were greeted by an automated message service that advised us that all the support reps were busy and to use the fax-back service or call back later. (We couldn't even leave a message.)

The fax-back service's six-page catalog didn't list sound card problems, so we tried calling back—again and again and again. After more than a dozen tries over two days, we gave up.

We finally reached a (non-technical) company spokesperson who acknowledged that some Gateway sound cards have problems releasing the sound driver once you exit Windows into DOS. The company claims to be working on a more elegant solution to the problem, and has also revamped its technical-support system so that you can leave a message or wait for an available service representative.

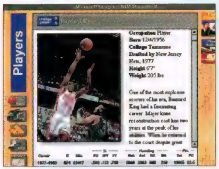
Until Gateway can resolve these problems, only people willing to live with some hassles should consider this otherwise powerful and well-priced system. (Gateway 2000; 800-846-2000; $2,499)

—Christopher Lindquist

Platform: Windows
Rating: ★ ★ ★

Thump, Thump, Swish!

Trend-conscious fans who identify with the latest sneaker commercials may be a little disappointed in **Microsoft Complete NBA Basketball.** Instead of a fast-paced visit to a playoff game, it's more like



Complete NBA Basketball features bios of every player who ever wore an NBA uniform, including the controversial Bernard King.

a nostalgic trip to the Hoops Hall of Fame with the emphasis on the historical and statistical. On the other hand, those who've lived and loved the game and its personalities will delight in the comprehensive numbers and commentary that track every player who's ever laced (or pumped) a sneaker in the National Basketball Association (NBA). You'll also find *The New York Times'* list of top 100 people in the game, published in 1991, the 100th anniversary of the game's invention. Unfortunately, the title reflects the NBA bias and gives short shrift to the American Basketball Association (ABA).

You get team histories and an almanac of the league from 1946 to 1994. You'll wanna check out the seating charts for every arena in the league.

If basketball is your passion, Microsoft Complete NBA Basketball is a slam dunk.

Complete NBA Basketball largely ignores the college game, but it does carry stories on the other pro leagues, including the wild days of the ABA's red, white, and blue ball.

Like Microsoft Complete Baseball (see review September 1994, page 24), you can log into an online service to download the previous night's scores, stats, and stories. And like the baseball disc, you can't mix and match the stats as you can in a true database.

Complete NBA Basketball features 100 film clips (admittedly short, grainy and jerky) and hundreds of audio sound bites that bring the game to life. Watch everything from a masterful Abdul-Jabbar make a classic skyhook to a heroic Willis Reed drag himself onto the floor in Game 7 of the 1970 finals. Listen as Kareem and Magic recall their first game together and get the inside story behind Marv Albert's, "Yes! And it counts."

There's even a tough trivia quiz. The 1,000-question game calculates your shooting percentage. Just like on the hardwood, anything over 50% will silence the critics. Enjoy this sweet set shot from corner court. (Microsoft; 800-426-9400; $49.95; $1.25 for each file downloaded from the online service)

–Fredric Paul

Platform: Win CD
Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

O.J., Oy Vey!

A new CD-ROM from CNN Interactive and Turner Home Entertainment reveals everything you ever wanted to know about the O.J. Simpson case, and much much more. **The People vs. O.J. Simpson: An Interactive Companion to the O.J. Simpson Trial** employs every trick in the interactive book: overdramatic introductory music, maps, close-up photos of the bloody crime scene, and video footage of the slo-mo Bronco chase. In fact, there's more than an hour of CNN video—all in pursuit of morbid bad taste. There's even a connection to CompuServe so you can download the latest gossip from CNN's O.J. forum—although the online component is completely unintegrated into the rest of the program. But despite some slick technical tricks, the hastily produced disc reeks of sensationalism and tacky exploitation. (CNN Interactive/Turner Home Entertainment; 800-294-0022; street price $20) *–Fredric Paul*

The program's abundant photos and video clips let you pore over the evidence again and again.

The People vs. O.J. Simpson gives detail-by-detail information on the most famous murder case in history.

Platform: Win/Mac CD
Rating: ★ ★

Spotlight

SCREEN SAVER MANIA

Ever Notice the Laptop In Jerry's Apartment?

Every Seinfeld fan has a favorite bit—the puffy shirt, the Pez dispenser, the Chinese restaurant. And, now you don't have to wait for Thursday nights to get your fix of Jerry and his friends.

Byron Preiss Multimedia's **Seinfeld Screen Saver & Planner** boasts a

What? You missed a "Seinfeld" episode! Consult the disc's show catalog to find out the details.

video collection of 100 highlights from the 1993-1994 season. You can browse for your favorites or string them together into a screen saver. There's also a basic desk calendar that plays a different video clip every day. It's fun, but if you're actually trying to schedule appointments, it's doubtful you'll want to waste the time.

If you simply can't get enough of the Seinfeld gang , the form maker lets you create fax cover sheets, greeting cards, and stationery with snapshots from the show. There's even a guide to all the episodes through last season, complete with a plot synopsis and the inside scoop on guest stars, writers, and directors. Unfortunately, you can't jump from the guide directly to a video clip of the episode. (Time Warner Interactive; 800-482-3766; $39.95) *–Christine Grech*

Platform: Win CD
Rating: ★ ★ ★

I'll mow the lawn when I'm good and ready.

The Personal Touch

Want to turn your PC into Obi-Wan Kenobi from *Star Wars*? Hankerin' to hang out in virtual reality with the Lawnmower Man? Or want Windows to sign off with Arnold's classic "Hasta la vista, baby!" from *Terminator 2*?

Remember this odd couple?

Three new computer personalization CD-ROMs from Sound Source Interactive will do just that.

The **Star Wars Personal Multimedia Collection** and the **Lawnmower Man Virtual Reality Multimedia Collection** go beyond simple sound clips to assign short videos to various actions you execute on your system. Closing an application, for example, can bring up a clip of the Death Star blasting Alderaan into bite-size chunks. Or watch CyberJobe's virtual hand moving through cyberspace every time you empty the trash can.

He meant it. He's back.

Terminator 2 Personal Multimedia Collection lacks video clips, but includes the awesome Terminator Factory and some truly incredible wallpaper. Arnold fans can watch an army of Terminators being assembled piece by piece by a construction robot. The Skynet Clock, meanwhile, gives you the times around the world (with haunting asides from the Terminator and his companion, Sarah Conner). There's even a bonus screen saver. (Sound Source Interactive; 800-877-4778; $39.95 each) *–Joel Enos*

Platform: Mac/Win CD
Ratings:
Lawnmower Man ★ ★ ★ ★
Star Wars ★ ★ ★
T2 ★ ★ ★ ★

Lifil Divil

Meet Mutt. He's grouchy. He's grumpy. But hey, let's face it, a little time in the underworld can make anyone a little edgy. And now Mutt has a problem. You see, he was chosen to get the Mystical Pizza of Plenty for his friends. And with all due respect to the eternally damned, the service in the underworld really sucks. In "Litil Divil," you can help Mutt as he makes his way through five soul-repenting levels in the Labyrinth of Chaos. Along the way you'll encounter gigantic spiders, demonic fish, and a few other things your priest never warned you about. All in a search for a double pepperoni with cheese. A few hours with Mutt, and you'll really appreciate that 30-minute-free-delivery thing.

PHILIPS MEDIA

PC CD-ROM — CD-i — PC Floppy

Optional Digital Video Cartridge required for CD-i. Litil Divil™ © 1993 Gremlin Graphics Software Limited. We apologize to anyone whose name actually is Mutt or, for that matter, any fire-spitting demons we may have offended. © 1994 Philips Media. All rights reserved.

Spotlight

MORE MANIA

Look Out For the Secretary With a Crossbow

Bill Gates may still hold the title of Über Geek, but Dilbert, syndicated funny pages superstar, created by systems analyst Scott Adams, is hot on his trail. Now, Dilbert and his pals Dogbert and Ratbert take their inspired satire of corporate life and computer culture to Mr. Bill's home turf with the **Dilbert Screen Saver Collection** from Delrina.

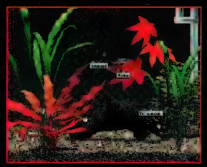
Dogbert delights in some serious lawyer bashing in the Dilbert Screen Saver Collection.

Watch Dilbert at work, see Ratbert at play, stand in awe as Saint Dogbert does battle with the demons of stupidity. Don't expect to hear them speak, though. In fact, don't expect to hear much of anything. While the 16 animated modules are classic Dilbert, the saver could have used more lavish sound. Still, the Dilbert Screen Saver Collection is a must have for true fans. (Delrina; 800-268-6082; $29) *–Christopher Lindquist*

Platform: Win/Mac
Rating: ★ ★ ★

Go Ahead, Tap On the Glass

If you've ever had an aquarium, you know how easy it is to get attached to your little finned friends. It's exciting when your fish have babies, and heart-breaking when you find one floating lifelessly at the top of the tank. **Aquazone** can make you feel the same when you look at your computer screen.



You can select the gravel, the plants, the accessories, and the fish. Treat them well and you'll have little gilled grandchildren!

Developed by 9003 inc. and published by Tecsys Computers, Aquazone lets you tend and breed tropical fish without the bother or the smell of a real aquarium. The program comes with a fully assembled sample tank, or lets you build your own. You get several species of virtual plants, gravel, other accessories, and of course, fish. Three floppy disks hold an assortment of 40 Neon Tetra and Leopard Catfish. Disks containing more fish and plant species are being translated from Japanese and will be available soon for $17 each.

Choose the fish you want to add. Then watch them swim spontaneously around the tank, hide in the plants, interact with each other, and even rush to the surface when you feed them, either manually or via the autofeeder. The sound of the filter gurgling in the background is truly soothing.

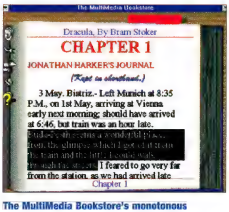
Just as in a real aquarium, you have to properly care for your virtual pets. Under the right conditions, they grow, mate, and produce babies. Forget to feed them, overclean the filter, or incorrectly adjust the chemical balance, and they get sick and die. You can attempt to cure your ill charges by moving them to a separate tank and treating them with the included medication. A pulldown menu lists all the vital statistics.

The program makes it easy to bond with the little electronic critters, but don't get too emotional. Even virtual fish don't live forever. Aquazone is currently only available for Macintosh but a Windows version will ship in February. (Tecsys Computer; 714-955-4968; $79) *–Ann M. Marcus*

Platform: Mac
Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

You Can't Curl Up With Your PC

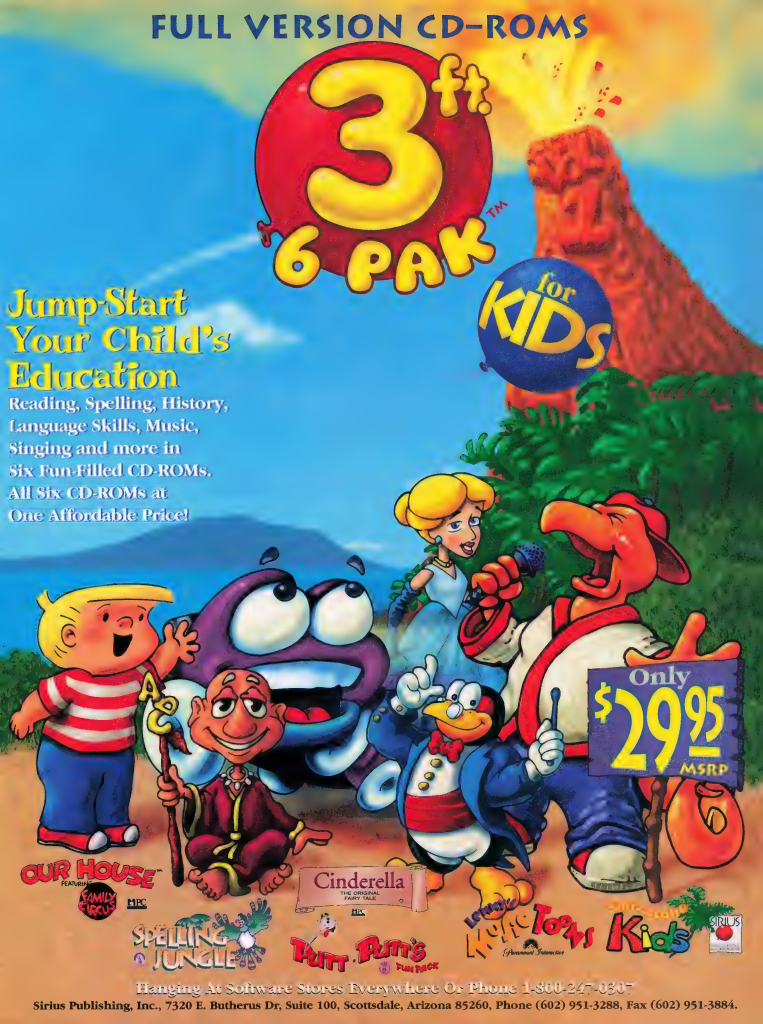
The basic premise of Hartwick Electronic Press' **MultiMedia Bookstore** is to give you mail-order access to the full text of 103 books. Once you obtain a special code, you can unlock the entire book and read it from the disc. Unfortunately, the Bookstore's interface is kludgy, the interactivity is limited, and the read option uses an incredibly grating synthesized voice to read you excerpts from the featured books. (Hartwick Electronic Press; 800-437-4037; disc is free, $5 for one book's access code, $10 for three) *–Joel Enos*


The MultiMedia Bookstore
Dracula, By Bram Stoker
CHAPTER 1
JONATHAN HARKER'S JOURNAL
(Kept in shorthand.)
3 May. Bistriz. - Left Munich at 8:35 P.M., on 1st May, arriving at Vienna early next morning; should have arrived at 6:46, but train was an hour late.
Buda-Pesth seems a wonderful place, from the glimpse which I got of it from the train and the little I could walk through the streets. I feared to go very far from the station, as we had arrived late
Chapter 1

The MultiMedia Bookstore's monotonous narration could drive you to do things even Bram Stoker's Dracula never imagined.

Platform: Win CD
Rating: ★

FULL VERSION CD-ROMS



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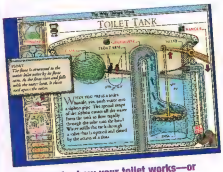
Spotlight

THE WAY THINGS WORK

Mammoth Proportions

How many woolly mammoths does it take to change a light bulb? Actually none, but it's nice to have one around when you're explaining how light bulbs work. In fact, the fuzzy mascot from David Macaulay's best-selling coffee-table book **The Way Things Work** makes regular appearances throughout the elaborately illustrated screens of DK Multimedia's new CD-ROM version of the book.

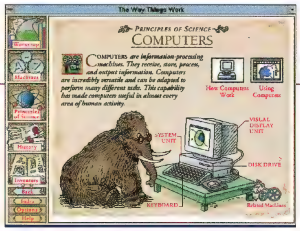


Ever wonder how your toilet works—or your drill, or your camera?

Like the book, The Way Things Work CD-ROM provides unique illustrations that explain the workings of 200 contraptions—from salad spinners and bathroom scales, to astronaut-maneuvering units to computers. Another section reveals the inside story on 22 scientific principles—such as electromagnetism and inclined planes. The addition of multimedia means lots of fun animations, great sound effects, and easy access to related topics.

The History section gives some perspective on how all this scientific stuff fits together by relying on a timeline that extends from Antiquity (7000 B.C.) to the Silicon Age (1984). The Inventors section is a scrapbook of biographical info on great scientists the world has known.

Even if you're not the scientific type, The Way Things Work is a fun and fascinating (but pricey) addition to your multimedia library. A Macintosh version is slated for early 1995. (DK Multimedia; 800-225-3362; $99.95) *—Christine Grech*


The Way Things Work
PRINCIPLES OF SCIENCE
COMPUTERS
COMPUTERS are information-processing machines. They receive, store, process, and output information. Computers are incredibly versatile and can be adapted to perform many different tasks. This capability has made computers useful in almost every area of human activity.
How Computers Work
Using Computers
SYSTEM UNIT
VISUAL DISPLAY UNIT
DISK DRIVE
KEYBOARD
Behind MacGraw

There's something comforting about a woolly mammoth.

Platform: Win CD
Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★

Advertisement

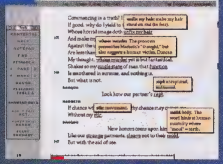
Double, Double, Toil and Trouble

For most people, Shakespeare is about as entertaining as long division. But a pair of new multimedia Macbeth titles promise to bring some life to the dusty bard by letting you recite the famous lines along with real actors.

Voyager's Mac-based **Macbeth** and IBM Multimedia Publishing Studio's **Karaoke Shakespeare Macbeth** for the PC take vastly different approaches, but both apply the karaoke concept to let you pretend to be a distinguished thespian.

Voyager's disc is by far the more serious and complex offering. In addition to letting you read along in any part, it offers (tiny) video clips of three films based on the play—Orson Welles' 1948 treatment, Akira Kurosawa's 1958 Samurai adaptation *Throne of Blood*, and Roman Polanski's controversial 1971 version—and uses hypertext links to let you explore the script. Forget the tedium of matching footnotes with their sources or rummaging through an Elizabethan dictionary midway through a scene. Simply click on any underlined word to bring up its *Oxford English Dictionary* definition.

You also get expert commentary by UCLA English professors David S. Rodes and A.R. Braunmuller, including the scholarly debate over who wrote Macbeth. Learn about witches in Shakespeare's day or dip a toe into arcane concepts like intertextuality and semiotics. A gallery shows images from famous performances, including Sir Laurence Olivier and Vivian Leigh. There is even an audio performance of the play by the Royal Shakespeare Company.



"Fair is Foul and Foul is Fair." The Witches from Act 1, Scene 1 of Roman Polanski's 1971 film version of Macbeth.

Karaoke Shakespeare, has no such intellectual pretensions. Choose the character and scene you want to play, adjust the speed of the performance, and become the great actor you always knew you could be. If you need inspiration, a Notes section supplies background on each scene. Up to ten players can act up a storm together.

So, if you're a serious Shakespeare student or you just like hamming it up for your friends, these discs hit the "damned spot." (Macbeth; Voyager; 800-446-2001; $49.95. Karaoke Shakespeare Macbeth; IBM Multimedia Publishing Studio; 800-898-8842; $32.95) *—Joel Enos*

IBM Macbeth
Platform: DOS CD **Rating:** ★ ★ ★

Voyager Macbeth
Platform: Mac CD **Rating:** ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Advertisement

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Spotlight

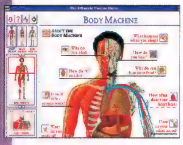
FANTASTIC VOYAGE

Corpus Electronicus

Think your computer is complicated? PCs are simple compared to the really complex machines that operate them: humans.

A pair of new CD-ROMs uses the power of technology to demonstrate the wonder and complexity of the human body, with beautifully rendered medical diagrams, narrated explanations of the body, a textbook of terms, and a panoply of user-friendly design elements.

The big difference between **A.D.A.M. The Inside Story** and **The Ultimate Human Body** is that A.D.A.M. sweetens its prescription with a generous dose of humor, while The Ultimate Human Body takes a more serious approach.



A.D.A.M, short for Animated Dissection of Anatomy for Medicine, will make you laugh while you enjoy a fascinating under-the-skin look at what makes you tick. Simply click the mouse to shed one of the body's 97 layers. Clicking on most central organs, such as the heart, brings up individual diagrams with terms, illustrations, and narration.

Check out The Ultimate Human Body...no not Heather Locklear's!

Your hosts Adam and Eve take you on an entertaining tour of the 12 body systems. Each trip starts with an engaging personal exchange. For example, the Respiratory System begins with Adam watching his favorite Maharishi conduct breathing exercises and then chatting about it with Eve. (A.D.A.M. Software; 800-408-2326; $79.95)

The Ultimate Human Body is divided into three sections: Body Machine, Body Organs, and Body Systems. As you investigate each section, the program's creative interface splits the screen vertically. On the right is a diagram of the body part you're exploring, on the left is the section diagram and additional boxes that help you navigate through the program. The sections are hyperlinked together to quickly answer your questions. Click on the "Find Out More" button to find related subjects complete with audio and animations.

The Body Machine section can answer such questions as: Why do we blink?, How do your joints move?, and How often does your heart beat? Some screens, however, are text-heavy and lack narration. (DK Multimedia; 800-225-3362; $79.95) *–Bill Meyer*

A.D.A.M.
Platform: Win CD/Mac CD **Rating:** ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Ultimate Human Body
Platform: Win CD **Rating:** ★ ★ ★ ★

Advertisement

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IVI PUBLISHING

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Inside Frank Lloyd Wright

Frank Lloyd Wright remains the most famous architect in the world, but few people have actually been inside one of his creations. The Ultimate Frank Lloyd Wright, America's Architect CD-ROM lets you enter not only his buildings, but his life, times, and ideas, as well.

This gorgeous title opens with a menu patterned after one of Wright's stained-glass window designs and delicate music lends an uncommon elegance to the experience.

There's material on seven of Wright's many projects in the Library. You can pore over hundreds of photos in Wright Works, or take a virtual Walking Tour inside the Robie House, the Larkin Building, and the Ennis-Brown House. If you crave something more creative, click and drag various geometric shapes to develop your Wright-like structure in Modeling Wright.

Structural Elements provides you with insights into Wright's design philosophy and his favorite sites, materials, forms, and patterns. In Life & Times, a clever multimedia timeline offers details on Wright's early days, his architectural influences and contemporaries, and his most important achievements.

WRIGHTSCAPE
Frank Lloyd Wright Home
Oak Park, Illinois (1889)
In 1889, Wright added a playroom, a dining room and a kitchen to his Oak Park home to accommodate his growing family of six children. His chair, for his own Parish, is Wright's only known highchair design, dating to 1902.

Wright did more than design buildings. He also created exquisite furniture.

Beyond its fascinating subject, what makes the disc so special is how it opens the doors to the Wrightian way of seeing—a world in which everything fits together seamlessly in service to a unified goal. Created for Microsoft by Byron Preiss Multimedia, The Ultimate Frank Lloyd Wright is the kind of multimedia project even the notoriously picky Wright would have enjoyed. (Microsoft/Byron Preiss; 800-426-9400; $60)

—Fredric Paul

Platform: Win CD
Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★

Advertisement

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When learning's this much

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discover and learn at their own pace (which, any parent will tell you, can approach the speed of light).

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interactive TOYS

edutainment

NO SMALL AFFAIR

George Shrinks

The popular children's story **George Shrinks** gets the interactive treatment from HarperCollins. This illustrated William Joyce tale tells of a young boy who wakes up to find that he's smaller than he was when he went to sleep. The fun begins when diminutive George tries to go about his regular chores—how will he make a bed that's as big as a football field or take a bath in a tub the size of Lake Superior?

Each of the 15 beautifully illustrated pages features hidden animations and songs. Joyce's illustrations are so stunning that they don't need added razzle-dazzle, but the humor will be a big hit with kids. They'll only wish there were more interactive elements—on some pages they'll discover only two or three, fewer than in most interactive kids' books. The program's whimsical tunes, though, won't disappoint.

George Shrinks is for ages 3 to 7. Prereaders can have the computer read to them, while older kids can read and explore on their own. HarperCollins also includes a mini-book of *George Shrinks*. (HarperCollins Interactive; 800-424-6234; $39.95)

—Christine Grech

Platform: Win/Mac CD

Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★

Animations and original songs spice up William Joyce's beautiful drawings.

When George shrinks, he gets a whole new perspective on life.

George wakes up a much smaller version of himself.

Can You Spell F-U-N?

My First Incredible Amazing Dictionary pronounces and defines 1,000 words.

With a name like **My First Incredible Amazing Dictionary,** this Windows CD-ROM from DK Multimedia had better be good. And it is!

Your kids won't think of this electronic dictionary as a mere reference tool. It's a fun place to learn about new words and ideas, with more than 1,000 illustrations and audio-annotated definitions.

Kids will find it easy to get around by pointing and clicking on the letters of the alphabet. Each word has a photograph or illustration along with its text definition. Click on the word to hear it pronounced, click on the picture to see a fun animation, or click on an icon to hear the definition read aloud. Additional icons let kids explore related terms such as opposites, alternative meanings, and thematically related words. The program is intended for children 3 to 7, but it extends its appeal to older kids with high-tech terms like compact disc.

The program also includes three word games. My First Incredible Amazing Dictionary is a surefire way to get kids excited about using a dictionary. A Macintosh version will be available in early 1995. (DK Multimedia; 800-225-3362; $59.95)

—Christine Grech

Platform: Win CD **Rating:** ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Kids can also explore word relationships, such as opposites.

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Lost in Space? Kids can use the magnifier to zero in on the correct location.

PUZZLE FUN

Get Lost

If your kids like to play hide-and-seek, then **Lost & Found** from GTE Interactive Media is sure to be a hit. Each CD-ROM in the three-volume set features 12 thematic scenes, which kids (ages 3 to 6) can search to locate specific objects. The concept resembles *Where's Waldo?* but with less detail, and occasional photos instead of illustrations.

Young virtuosos can compose ear-piercing tunes with the game's musical puzzle interface.

Each scene comes with an audio poem that provides clues for finding each object. For example, in Tub Toy Fun, the clue for selecting a particular bathtub toy is: "All these lobsters in a line; Can you pick the greenest kind?" For kids who need extra help, the flashlight tool narrows down the search area and the magnifier tool zooms in on the scene.

Kids can play each scene through or return to their favorites to find a new set of objects and clues from the 40 or so available in each scene. For a fun twist, a puzzle interface plays loud rock music when the mouse passes over each piece. (GTE Interactive Media; 800-483-8632; street price $29.95 each) *—Christine Grech*

Platform: Win/Mac CD
Rating: ★ ★ ★

Players must deal with some real fruits in Tutti Frutti.

Creative Pursuits

Every picture tells a story, and your kids can spin even more imaginative ones with the wacky characters and scenes they create in Aldus's **Art Explorer.** This painting and drawing program for kids 9 to 14 features more than 200 stamps, eight backgrounds, and a slew of professional-quality drawing tools—more than enough to inspire any child's creativity.

What? You've never seen a dinosaur in boxer shorts?

With Art Explorer, kids are free to explore their wild sides.

Young artists begin by choosing from a selection of backgrounds such as Aqua World, Fashion World, and Future World. They can also start with a blank screen. The next step is to use the vast collection of stamps to assemble zany characters—choosing different arms, legs, torsos, bulging eyeballs, fins, fangs, and tails. Finally, artists dress up these crazy characters with funky hats, groovy pants, and other fashionable garb. Art Explorer lets youngsters embellish their scenes by painting, drawing, or splattering color from a palette of 256 shades, 54 blends, and 42 textures.

Art Explorer isn't merely child's play, though. The artist's tools in Art Explorer let kids achieve the same high-quality results as are possible in Aldus's best-selling grown-up paint program, Super Paint. If a creature's feet are out of proportion with its body, for example, kids can use Expert Transformation to stretch or rotate the appendages for a better fit.

Art Explorer encourages kids to think outside the lines, and its full set of features gives them room to grow. (Aldus Consumer Division; 800-888-6293; approximately $45) *—Cindy Penrose*

Platform: Mac **Rating:** ★ ★ ★ ★

Monker Business

Just because a publisher can produce high-quality, affordable books doesn't mean it can also create great software. Western Publishing, the company behind the Golden Books line of children's books, has created several new programs based on its Step Ahead line of workbooks. Both **Monker's Spelling Submarine** and **Monker's Math Magic,** for the 6- to-8-year-old set, star a blue critter named Monker.

The titles feature just two learning activities each. In Monker's Spelling Submarine, kids click around the sub to discover a few simple animations or to get to the activities. A fill-in-the-missing-letters drill shares space with a boat game in which players build rhyming words by finding the correct letters in a maze. The activities are appropriately simple, but the graphics are unnecessarily basic as well. The characters and their environment are flat and lack the detail that you'll find in most kids' software.

Similarly, Monker's Math Magic features a math-machine game that rewards players for giving correct answers to math problems. Kids can also play a maze game here.

The products are certainly affordable at $20 each, but with the Western Publishing name on the box, we expected a higher-quality product. (Western Publishing; 414-631-1898; street price $20 each)

–Christine Grech

Platform: Windows
Rating: ★ ★

In the math factory, kids earn virtual toys by correctly solving equations.

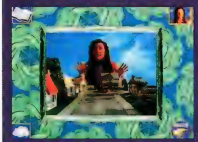
Players help Monker guide the boat to the letters that form a rhyming word.

New and Improved

Buy a copy of A Party at Crawdad Creek, and your favorite school gets one too.

• Computer storybooks and reading programs are a dime a dozen, but here's a first: a program that introduces kids to the art of storytelling. **What's My Story** from Digital Pictures is a computer storyteller and a teacher of the oral tradition.

Professional storyteller Jill Wright narrates video stories based on classic tales. She also encourages kids to create their own stories by guiding them through the process of selecting video clips (from nearly 700 choices) and weaving together an original tale. Young orators can



What's My Story encourages kids to create their own narrated video stories.

also add music and other audio effects and even record their narration if they have a microphone handy. Look for What's My Story in time for the holidays. (Digital Pictures; 415-345-5300; Mac CD, street price $35)

• Young fans of the PBS "Ghostwriter" series will be fascinated by **The Case of the Blue Makva.** A collaboration between the Children's Television Workshop and Microsoft, this add-on to Creative Writer is a mystery series featuring the "Ghostwriter" characters.

Using the floppy-based or CD version of Creative Writer, kids open up the ten mysteries and start sleuthing. They create a casebook to keep track of clues. Goodies like secret codes and invisible ink help them uncover the real identity of the Blue Makva. The product also provides suggestions for related activities that kids can pursue in Creative Writer. (Microsoft; 800-426-9400; Windows/Mac, $19.95)

• Preschoolers are invited to attend **A Party at Crawdad Creek,** an early-learning program from Software Sorcery. Frisko Fox and the other forest critters prepare for a big bash; kids can help Frisko by sorting numbers and objects and selecting and matching colors.

A Party at Crawdad Creek is the first in Software Sorcery's Forest Tales series. And if you buy a copy before January 31, 1995, the company will donate a copy to the school of your choice. (Software Sorcery; 800-541-4489; Win CD, $49.95)

• Remember Colorforms, those intriguing, colorful plastic stick-ons you played with as a kid? Well, Colorforms is now available on the

Colorforms go digital: Young artists can create pictures by combining shapes and figures against backgrounds.

computer for *your* kids. **My First Colorforms** and the **Colorforms Computer Fun Set** let children combine colorful shapes and figures to create pictures. And youthful artists can even experiment with a sample of the old-fashioned, low-tech plastic Colorforms that are included in the package and stick to the box's specially coated inside flap. (Gryphon Software; 800-795-0981; Windows/Mac, $49)

ESPN
NATIONAL HOCKEY NIGHT

IF YOU THINK ALL HOCKEY SIMULATIONS ARE ALIKE, THIS ONE WILL GIVE YOU A NEW PERSPECTIVE.

Topps *Look for free Topps Premier Hockey Cards inside each package of ESPN National Hockey Night on Sega CD.*

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REAL HOCKEY PLAYERS WERE FILMED AND DIGITIZED INTO THE GAME. (OVER 10 MINUTES OF VIDEO HIGHLIGHTS ON SEGA CD.)

ESPN National Hockey Night takes you out of the nosebleed section and throws you right down on the ice. This is the only hockey simulation with two perspectives - vertical and side views. So when your center gets checked into the boards, you can see it from the boards. And when your right wing floats a pass through the crease from behind the net, you can watch it from behind the net.

The players aren't just big. They're huge. And so is the ice surface. So all the action is right in your face.

REALISTIC PUCK PHYSICS. THE PUCK FLIPS AND BOUNCES AROUND THE ICE LIKE THE REAL THING.

The slap shots, wrist shots, drop passes, and flip passes, all with the most realistic puck physics you've ever seen. Did you say hitting?

A BIGGER ICE SURFACE THAT ALLOWS BEHIND-THE-NET ACTION.

ESPN National Hockey Night lets you dish out three different kinds of checks (on Sega CD you can dish them out to all the real players in the NHL). And if that's not enough to make you hum "Oh Canada," ESPN's Bill Clement is there in the booth every step of the way. So if your star goalie suddenly becomes a sieve in the Stanley Cup® Finals, Bill won't let you forget it. Check out ESPN National Hockey Night. It'll give you a whole new perspective on hockey.

ALL 26 NHL® TEAMS

FULL 84 GAME SEASON, AND A BATTERY BACK-UP THAT SAVES YOUR TEAM'S RECORD.

TEST YOUR SHARP SHOOTING AND SKATING ABILITY IN THE ALL-STAR SKILLS CHALLENGE.

SONY IMAGESOFT

EVERYTHING ELSE IS JUST PRACTICE.™

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ESPN SUNDAY NIGHT NFL

WE'VE GOT SOMETHING YOU WON'T SEE IN ANY OTHER GAME. (YOUR RECEIVERS)

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E-Z CAM ZOOMS IN ON THE BALL CARRIER SO YOU'RE RIGHT THERE TO SEE EVERY BONE-CRUSHING HIT AND SHOESTRING TACKLE.

Real quarterbacks don't look through passing windows when they drop back, so why should you? ESPN Sunday Night NFL gives you a full-field perspective, so you can check off all your receivers while reading a nickel zone, or burning a cornerback in man-to-man.

GIVE 'EM THE OLD SHAKE 'N BAKE WITH UNIQUE SPIN MOVES, AND SPEED BURSTS.

From the moment your QB releases the ball, you've got complete control of your receivers. And when you complete the pass, the E-Z Cam zooms right in on the action. But don't fumble, or you'll be humiliated by Chris Berman taunting you from the booth (realism has its price). The game has audibles, updated NFL rules (like the 2-point conversion), and play options most other games wouldn't even understand. You can play an entire season in the rain, sun and snow, and save all your stats with the battery back-up.

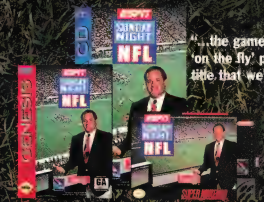
ALL 28 NFL TEAMS

FULL CONTROL OF YOUR RECEIVERS AT THE RELEASE OF THE BALL LETS YOU RUN UNDER THE BOMB OR COME BACK FOR AN UNDERTHROWN PASS.

ESPN Sports Center

CAN YOU SAY "4-D-M-B-L-E"? CHRIS BERMAN CAN. AND WILL. LIVE FROM THE BOOTH. ON SEGA-CD. THERE'S EVEN MORE BERMAN PLUS OVER 15 MINUTES OF VIDEO MOVE-UPS.

So if you love passing windows, buy another game. If you love passing, buy ESPN Sunday Night NFL.



"...the game features the most intuitive 'on the fly' passing game of any football title that we've played to date."
-DieHard GameFan

SONY

EVERYTHING ELSE IS JUST PRACTICE.*

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Game On

Corey Sandler

Hollywood, If It Could

Baseball would be so much simpler if the owners didn't have to hire players. Movies would be much more profitable if producers could avoid paying astronomical sums to the superstars. And computer games would be infinitely easier to make if the realism still centered on the length of Ms. Pac-Man's eyelashes.

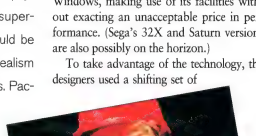
Don't hold your breath, but it may just come to pass. The new generation of computer games questions the very concept of realism in two seemingly contradictory ways. Some games make heavy use of video of live actors, integrated into a digital environment. Others deconstruct actors into digital characters that sometimes look more lifelike than reality. Is it real, or is it memory? And does it matter?

When the CD-ROM version of Blown Away burst onto the scene last fall, it challenged the whole idea of a movie sequel. The multimedia game, sold by IVI Publishing, features a few scenes from the movie, including bombs, explosions, fuses, and an aerial shot of Boston, but the bulk uses original footage. The action sequences for the game were developed using Hollywood production techniques and a cast of 15 actors.

Computer-generated characters let you alter the costumes, modify the faces, even perform a sex change.

This interactive movie slathers your monitor with full-screen video of real actors; you control the progress of the story by mouse clicks in more than a dozen puzzles. And Blown Away runs under Windows, making use of its facilities without exacting an unacceptable price in performance. (Sega's 32X and Saturn versions are also possibly on the horizon.)

To take advantage of the technology, the designers used a shifting set of custom palettes to get the most out of Windows' 256 colors. For example, if a character is wearing a yellow dress, the palette for that scene may have an expanded set of yellows to allow more subtle shading.



Blown Away, the game, uses real footage from the movie.

Alien Trilogy relies on motion-capture technology to translate the movies into a game.

Howard Tullman, CEO of Imagination Pilots, which developed Blown Away, is confident the mix will work. "Hollywood has survived on the basis of good entertainment," Tullman says. "The technology is just added to it."

Blown Away is an unusual example of direct involvement by a film studio. MGM helped fund the game and was involved in its design; videos of the movie will carry a trailer advertising the PC game.

Wavefront, one of the leading makers of digital animation tools for game makers, has its own definition of "realism." The company's GameWare suite of sophisticated software tools is used to create impressive digital actors for the next generation of games.

One GameWare user is Acclaim Entertainment, which is developing the Alien Trilogy game for Sega's 32X and Saturn. In Acclaim's Motion Capture Studio, actors go through their paces wearing more than 100 optical sensors that let the computer track some 50 bone rotations. The resulting wireframe of human motion can then be used with products like GameWare to apply realistic but utterly synthetic flesh, clothing, and special effects.

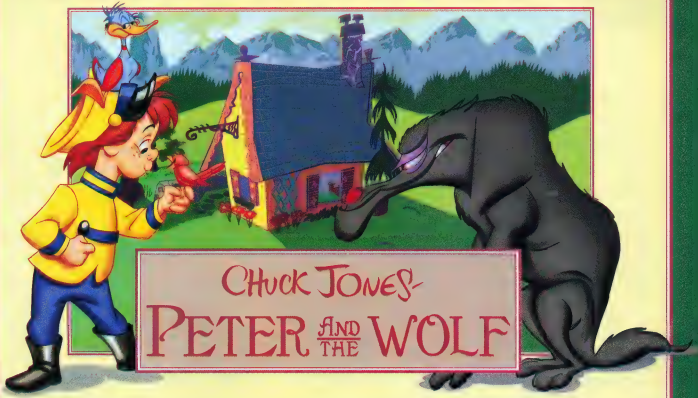
The resulting characters can be placed into amazing and improbable situations. Perhaps even more significant is the ability to change almost every element of the resulting scene. You can move the "camera" to any location, adjust the lighting on an already recorded scene, alter costumes, modify faces, or even perform a sex change.

Game makers can reuse elements in sequels and spin-offs, and they can use designs created for a game to help produce the inevitable commercial spinoffs—the wireframe model for a character can be used to cast a mold for a plastic figure.

As is fitting for this yin-yang tale, Acclaim's connection to Hollywood runs the other way. The company is working with Warner Bros. on some of the special effects for this summer's *Batman Forever* movie.

However the battle between digital and video reality shakes out, computer games are undeniably the place where Hollywood crosses paths with Silicon Valley.

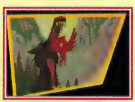
THIS INTERACTIVE MUSIC ADVENTURE WILL HAVE YOUR CHILD WHISTLING A NEW 'TOON!



Kid-friendly and loaded with fun, the timeless tale of ***Peter and The Wolf*** is now available in a sensational new interactive version by animation legend Chuck Jones and conductor/director George Daugherty. Starring the voices of Kirstie Alley, Lloyd Bridges and Ross Malinger, this colorful interpretation of the beloved classic is fine-'tooned fun for kids of all ages. Children will delight in the gloriously animated tale...frolic with Peter and his friends in an exciting arcade-style game...and discover the wonders of music through hours of interactive play. This enchanting CD-ROM also comes with **a bonus audio CD** especially recorded for this production by the 65-member Time Warner Symphony Orchestra. A magical world of music and discovery is waiting. Visit your favorite software retailer, or call toll free (800-482-3766) today!

Eddie Deezen/Duck

Ross Comer



Other ***Peter and The Wolf*** products available from Warner Books and TW Kids.

TIME WARNER INTERACTIVE

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Published by Time Warner Interactive, 2210 West Olive Avenue, Burbank, CA 91506. Internet: TWIinfo@aol.com. AOL Keyword:TWI.

CD-ROM

IF/X interactive

Tube Man

Keith Ferrell

Interactive Game Shows

In the depths of last summer's baseball strike, I spent—or wasted—a few hours surfing the other games on TV, specifically the game shows.

My God! If interactive television games are to evolve from the current crop of what passes for "games" on TV, we're all in deep trouble. Charles Lincoln Van Doren may have broken faith with the American public and his own conscience by participating in rigged game shows back in the '50s, but at least his winnings depended on his pretending to know something. Or, as the movie *Quiz Show* pointed out, his ability to act. There was a simulacrum of skill, anyway. Those days are long gone.

The late William Henry made a telling point about game shows in his book *In Defense of Elitism* (Doubleday, $20).With the exception of "Jeopardy," Henry observes, every other game show on TV today is essentially a game of chance rather than skill. Sure, the players on "Wheel of Fortune" have to decipher phrases that wouldn't stump a nine-year-old, but the essence of the game is the spinning of the wheel, not the cracking of the code.

In other words, the heart of the modern game show is like that of the modern lottery: If your number comes up, you can win. If not, you're out of luck.

Last month, I speculated that the first widespread interactive TV games would focus on gambling. Let me offer an alternative: Look for game shows to add audience participation via electronic media. And no matter how sophisticated the electronics, the basic game will be some variation of that spinning wheel.

So how about a game show that spins its wheels in concert with wheels in the homes—on PCs, or loaded into Sega/Nintendo/3DO/whatever platforms? The players are all linked to the central game-show production stage by modem, with home audience players selected at random. If your number comes up, you're on the air.

This presupposes live game shows, but so does any approach to televised group interactivity. This is presently too complex to manage on a national scale. But once a few small shows start showing solid audiences, national shows will follow. In fact, national versions could be amalgams of the local versions.

ILLUSTRATION BY R.M. KATO

As the technology improves, though, game shows may get truly local. In short, give everybody their own show.

Look for today's TV game shows to add electronic audience participation.

Not really, of course, but close. Here's a scenario: Imagine some humongous honker of a server, dishing up game shows with Max Headroom-style digital hosts who'll speak and laugh and leer at you, right there on your couch, just as though you had been called from the studio audience to "Come on down!" They'll know you, just like they'll know your neighbor and the rest of the people who've tuned in. Not everyone will get on every night, of course; that would require too many prizes. But you'll get on often enough, and it'll be exciting enough, to keep you and those neighbors of yours hooked, and keep the sponsors very happy indeed.

Does it matter that the sort of games that will pass for interactive in such a scenario will undoubtedly be sillier than the claptrap already on TV? Silly enough that they can touch a mass audience via an interface not too different from a remote-control keypad?

Of course it doesn't matter. That's what makes TV great. Make it simple, make it cheap, make it mass. Ignore the fact that there are whole realms of interactive gaming that might make worthwhile entertainment at home. What about TV fantasy sports leagues? How about large-scale fantasy role-playing? Educational games for the whole family, at every level of intelligence and interest? An interactive "Jeopardy" with questions just as broad-based and challenging? In other words, games that entertain, and also help raise the national intelligence level.

Now, these are already available, in any flavor you want. Just check out the multimedia and game sections of your local software peddler. But broadcasting quality like this? Putting intelligence out over the cables?

Naah—not on our TVs.

Keith Ferrell is editor of Omni, *editorial director of General Media Services, and science & technology editor for* Penthouse, *each of which covers the interactive revolution in its own way.*

Doc and I'd yourself of this binary bacteria before your head explodes and you end up decorating the

It's an infection.

Your name: Sol Cutter. Occupation: data thief. The bad news is you've just down-

loaded a particularly repugnant little cyber-virus called "Burn:Cycle" into your skull. You have exactly two hours to find

entire room with your cerebellum. And the good news? Gray matter doesn't stain. Philips Media

coming soon
MAC & PC CD-ROM

CD-i

PHILIPS

Limited first editions of Burn:Cycle contain a separate original hardcore rave soundtrack CD. Burn:Cycle ©1994 Trip Media Limited. © Philips Interactive Media International Ltd. ©1994 Simon Bosswell. All rights reserved. ©1994 Philips Media. All rights reserved.

Multimaniac

Paul Bonner

How My Pc Got Me Loaded

Barkeep, set one up for me and my friend here."

In celebration of *Electronic Entertainment's* First Anniversary issue, the Multimaniac wants to buy you a beer. And not just any tap swill, but a rich, hearty ale, lovingly hand-crafted until it shines with the complexity and richness of a fine Bordeaux.

Unfortunately, it's not going to work. Doyle's (my local beer joint) couldn't possibly hold us all, and besides, the Multimaniac likes to stay in his lair surrounded by his electronic accouterments.

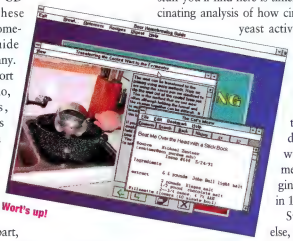
Instead, let's use our multimedia equipment to make our own beers and enjoy them in the privacy of our homes. (Warning! This offer is void where prohibited by law. I sure wouldn't want to offend any teetotaling lawmen in the few remaining places where home brewing is banned.)

Ready? Okay, let's get brewing. Personally, I'm in the mood for some suds that I can really sink my teeth into, maybe a nice robust porter or an oatmeal stout. But perhaps you're more inclined to something lighter...a pale ale or lager, or even a nice wheat beer?

The Beer Homebrewing Guide delivers an abundance of warmth and brewing wisdom.

No matter what your pleasure, you can find the info you need to create these heady nectars from water, barley malt, hops, and yeast in the Beer Homebrewing Guide, a CD-ROM-based reference and tutorial on brewing beer at home. (Walnut Creek CD ROM; 800-786-9907; Win CD, $39.95)

Before we begin, though, I have to warn you that compared to the glitzy, multimedia extravaganzas that roll through here every month, the Beer Homebrewing Guide seems, well, home brewed. Consider full-motion video—*de rigeur* for any self-respecting CD-ROM disc these days. The Homebrewing Guide doesn't have any. Nor does it sport digitized audio, animations, or sequences morphing a bottle of Bud into a glass of real beer.



Wort's up!

Also missing, for the most part, are what the Multimaniac considers professional production values. In their place, you get such charming incongruities as a picture of someone stirring a caldron of steaming wort (an intermediary stage in the brewing process) with a short-handled wooden spoon, accompanied by the dubious caption: "The main idea to remember is the heated wort can cause serious burns so a long-handled utensil is suggested. The one we used in the picture is not the best."

Er…right. Still, much as the Multimaniac in me hates to admit it, slickness and gratuitous electro-glitz aren't everything, and in their place, the Beer Homebrewing Guide delivers an abundance of beer-making wisdom. I found the step-by-step, photo-illustrated guide to the brewing process quite interesting—it filled in some of the gaps in my self-taught brew meister knowledge. The reference materials included on the disc also proved quite useful—at last I've got a second source for Hallertauer hops.

There was also something weirdly amusing about reading through the six years worth of the Homebrew Digest, an indexed electronic newsletter that consists of thousands of messages, harangues, and flames collected from the home brewing newsgroup on the Internet. Some of the stuff you'll find here is timeless—like a fascinating analysis of how cinnamon affects yeast activity—but much of it is a bit too asynchronous for my tastes. And there's no way to fire off a devastatingly witty reply to a message that originated way back in 1989.

Still, if nothing else, the Homebrew Digest messages gave me something entertaining to do while I waited for my beer to brew. And what beer it was. Because the best part of the Homebrewing Guide for me—the part that will appeal to even the most experienced beer makers, is the collection of literally hundreds of astoundingly good recipes for everything from Elvis Has Left The Building Imperial Stout to Feats Don't Fail Me Ale, with stops along the way for Breakfast Barleywine and Russian Empirical Stout.

I could spend a lifetime brewing—and then downing—a batch of each and every wonderful recipe on the disc, but the Multimaniac has got a deadline to meet. Still, I'm pleased to report that I've taken the liberty of sampling the first fruits of my labors with the Homebrewing Guide, a little number called Wanking Fresh Deathbrew.

Sip…sip. Umm… Not bad. Not bad at all. It doesn't quite compare to my famous Naked Twister Ale, but it's not a bad start.

MORE devastating than any MORTAL could imagine.

The NEW Eternal Champions on Sega CD.
The game other fighting games would kill to be.

Eternal Champions on Sega CD brings back the original nine, plus four blistering new fighters.

There are also four extra-heinous ways to finish off your enemies: Enhanced Overkill, Sudden Death, Vendetta and Cinekill.™

An all-new Tournament Mode pushes your skills to the absolute limit.

Mortal? Be Eternal.

MATURE M AGES 17+

SEGA

SEGA CD

DEEP WATER

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ROCKET
SCIENCE

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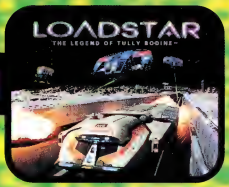

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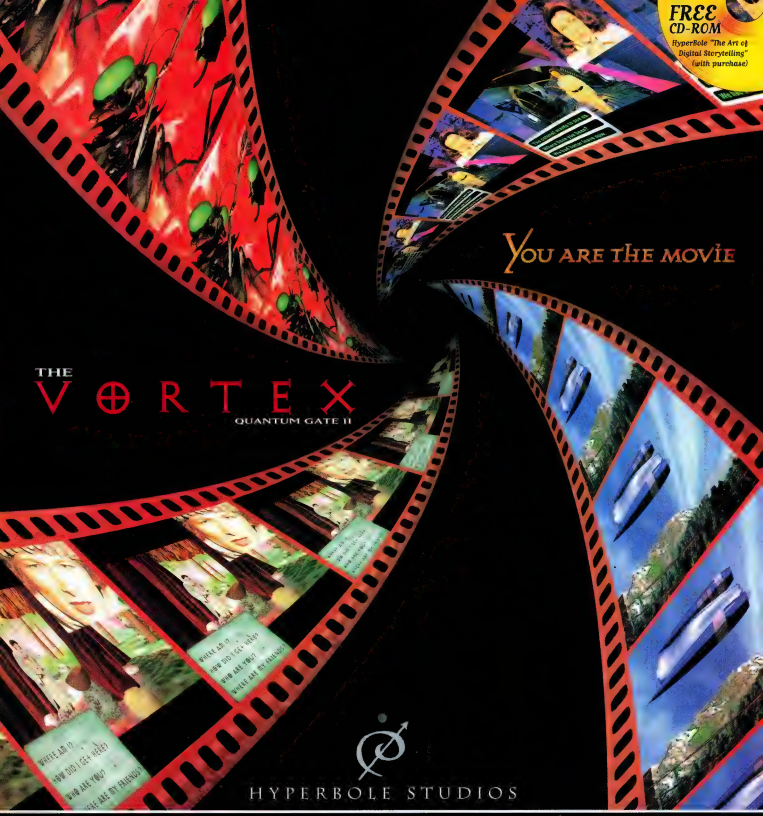

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On the Wings of Eagles [and Warthogs and Camels]

A complete guide to choosing and flying computer flight simulations.

PERSONAL COMPUTERS let us do all sorts of things that would otherwise be outside our reach. Sophisticated sports simulations let even timid fans butt heads with the pros in ball games and auto races. Military sims can turn anyone into an armchair general. And city simulators like SimCity let you enter politics without having to dine with lobbyists.

But the most exhilarating simulation vein by far is flight. Why? Well, since the dawn of man, people have envied the graceful free-flying ease of the birds. Although we now live in the age of flight, few people will ever get the chance to send an F-18 screaming through the sky at Mach speed. For most of us, nabbing a window seat in a 747 is about as much as we can hope for. Flight sims, though, let anyone with a PC or a Mac experience aerial thrills without investing thousands of dollars and hundreds of hours of training—and without the nagging fear of dying in a flaming fireball.

To satisfy the urge to fly, today's flight sims encompass just about every aspect of the airborne experience, from soaring in a single-seat sailplane to the nerve-wracking target approach in a World War II-era B-17 bomber. A good flight sim can make you forget that you're staring at a computer monitor and take you to a world where speed equals life and "six o'clock" means more than just quitting time.

Flight sims fall into two basic categories, military and non-military, each with several subcategories. Non-military sims include both general (pleasure and private business) and commercial (airline and commuter) aviation, while military sims offer combat flying in everything from Sopwith Camels to V/STOL (Vertical/Short Takeoff and Landing) aircraft like the Harrier.

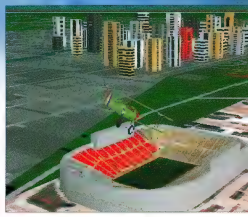
Although some old-timers still prefer to control their craft by keyboard, most insist on using a high-quality joystick. Real enthusiasts may even spring for a flight yoke and separate throttle and rudder controls. Any one of these peripherals will boost the realism—and the fun—significantly.

While plenty of competitors crowd the virtual skies, most categories have one special simulator that sets the standard for everything else. To make sure you enjoy your flight, we'll steer you toward the *E²* Aces in civilian flight sims, World War I biplane battles, aerial combat in WWII, and even on to the modern jet age. And we'll peek into the hangar to spot some unusual sims that don't fit into the other categories but that offer off-the-ground experiences you won't want to miss.

By Scott "Zuma" Wolf

Civilian Flight

Microsoft Flight Simulator 5.0



Time to give those football fans a thrill.

Great graphics and realistic flight mechanics highlight Flight Simulator.

Originally designed for the Apple II personal computer, Microsoft Flight Simulator debuted on the IBM PC in 1984. It's been going strong ever since. The last major upgrade, Version 4.0, could display only 16 colors. Version 5.0 now has much-improved graphics with 256 colors and adds a good deal of realism to aircraft performance as well.

Flight Simulator 5.0 features 3-D, photo-realistic cockpit displays for each of its four aircraft, extensive flight controls, minimum Visual Flight Rule (VFR) and Instrument Flight Rule (IFR) instrumentation as specified by the Federal Aviation Administration, and dramatic scenery.

But its best feature may be its flexibility. You can tailor the in-flight realism to suit your skill level by adjusting environmental factors such as season, time of day, and cloud cover. You can also modify aircraft reliability to determine how frequently flight problems arise. Flight Simulator 5.0 gently steps beginners through flying lessons with simplified controls, but also lets seasoned pilots take the yoke with a full set of advanced flight controls. You can even fly with a friend in dual-player mode using a modem or serial connection.

The program's four built-in aircraft simulate a wide range of flight environments. The high-performance propeller-driven Cessna Skylane RG is ideal for training because its flight characteristics tend to keep the pilot busy; the Learjet 35A, designed for fun, is fast, aerobatic, and powerful; the Schweizer 2-32 Sailplane promises a graceful flight soaring high on thermals; and the vintage World War I Sopwith Camel harkens back to days of silk scarves and derring-do. (Its twin Vickers machine guns have been disabled.)

To make things even more interesting, the success of the Flight Simulator series has spawned a number of add-on products, from additional scenery to challenging adventure scenarios.

Microsoft Flight Simulator represents the state of the art in noncombat PC flight simulation, and no serious flight-sim fan should be without it. One word of warning: You'll need a 486 or a Pentium PC to keep things moving at the highest levels of detail.

Microsoft; 800-426-9400; DOS, street price $50

Flight Lessons: Microsoft Flight Simulator 5.0

- When using a mouse to fly your plane, remember to use the right mouse button to switch between yoke control and normal mouse control.
- If you begin to panic, the Land Me feature lets an automated instructor land your plane at the nearest airport.
- Choosing the Unlimited Fuel option makes things easier, but you'll learn more about flying without it. You'll have to consider the range of your aircraft, the rate of fuel consumption, and how your flight is affected by fuel economy.
- Flight Simulator has a few surprises: Search the hangars at O'Hare International, buzz the BAO building in Champaign, Illinois, and check out the Statue of Liberty's backside. If you're really good, you can fly up Miss Liberty's nostril.

Civilian Alternatives

Microsoft's Flight Simulator isn't the only nonmilitary game in town. SubLOGIC's **Flight Assignment: ATP** (Airline Transport Pilot) simulates five common airliners (Boeing 737, 767, and 747, Airbus A320, and Shorts 360) flying over scenery covering the entire continental United States.

ATP contains hundreds of predefined flight assignments, as well as plan-it-yourself routes. It also features an advanced autoflight system that lets novice pilots watch and learn as Jack the autopilot and Roger the air traffic controller work together to deliver your precious cargo.

Recently re-released on CD-ROM as USA with ATP on CD-ROM, ATP now comes with both the USA East and USA West scenery databases plus the digitized voices of Air Traffic Controllers. (SubLOGIC; 800-637-4983; DOS, $44.95; with USA East and West, $64.95; DOS CD, $109.95)

If hauling commercial cargo isn't your bag, try Disney Software's creative and original **Stunt Island.** More than just a flight sim, Stunt Island is also an elegant "crash" course in Hollywood film-making.

Choose any of 34 different aircraft (including a pterodactyl and a duck) to fly 32 challenging stunt locations, or design and fly your own stunts using a library of more than 800 objects, from bridges to barns. Strategically place as many as eight cameras to capture the action, then edit the footage and add music. (Disney Software; 800-688-1520; DOS, $59.95)

World War I

Red Baron

Not everyone is satisfied just flying around admiring the sights; sometimes it takes a more dangerous game to get your blood moving. For many people, the most exciting flying took place back in the days of open cockpits.

Although Dynamix's Red Baron came out way back in 1990, it remains the premier World War I flight sim. Red Baron sends you back to the dawn of aerial combat—a chivalrous and almost romantic time when dogfighting was a more personal, eyeball-to-eyeball affair.

Red Baron lets you fly for either the British Royal Flying Corps or the German Air Service. Over the course of the war, 28 different aircraft become available, each in beautifully rendered 3-D depictions. The accurately detailed game world includes the jagged scar of the trenches down the German-French front, Verdun, the Somme, Paris, and London.

Although the game includes plenty of individual missions, the Campaign play option brings the era to life with more than 40 sequential missions running from 1915 to 1918. Balloon busting, Zeppelin hunting, and bomber escorting are just a few of the missions you'll fly during your career, in addition to facing the most feared and respected aces each side had to offer.

Balloon busting is a blast in Red Baron.

The Mission Builder lets you create your own scenarios.

Dynamix paid special attention to the flying and fighting abilities of the computer-controlled aces: You'll actually encounter the different flying styles of more than 20 outstanding aviators, including the Red Baron himself, Manfred von Richtofen.

Best of all, Red Baron's revolutionary mission recorder lets you save entire missions to disk, then edit and replay them VCR-style. You can even jump back into the taped action and attempt to alter the outcome of the battle!

The addition of the Mission Builder in 1992 gave Red Baron five new planes, six new aces, and a few minor enhancements, including dual joystick and rudder support. But the main improvement was the Mission Builder itself—a simple but powerful tool for creating custom missions. By carefully selecting mission types, time of day, specific aircraft, and opponents, you can polish your strengths and pinpoint your weaknesses.

Dynamix has just re-released Red Baron on a CD-ROM with the Mission Builder, a complete online manual, and the first title in the company's Great War Planes series, A10 Tank Killer, featuring the U.S. Army's formidable Warthog.

Dynamix; 800-757-7707; DOS/Mac, $34.95; DOS CD, $49.95

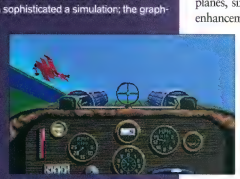
Flight Lessons: Red Baron

- Always check your six (directly behind you) after an ace passes you head-on: Chances are good that he'll circle to his left. When he does, cut inside his turn with a low-speed yo-yo (drop your nose while turning to the right to tighten your turn, then pull back on the stick to get a head on your opponent).
- If high scores are what you're after, practice destroying balloons and Zeppelins, and always try to return to your own aerodrome.
- To really get an edge on your computer-controlled enemies, try flying Multi-Player Red Baron on Sierra's ImagiNation Network (INN). Once you learn to handle thinking human opponents, the artificially intelligent ones will be no problem. There's even a free INN demo account on the Red Baron CD-ROM.

World War I Alternatives

Knights of the Sky, by MicroProse, was released the same year as Red Baron but isn't nearly as sophisticated a simulation; the graphics are much simpler and the flight models far less developed.

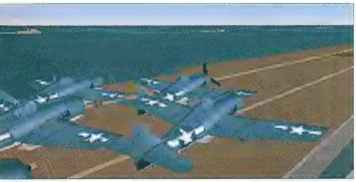
Still, Knights is easy to get into, and five difficulty levels ensure a challenge for just about anyone. Although you can practice in any of 20 British, French, and German aircraft, Campaign play requires you to fly for the Allies. And while it doesn't hold up too well by today's standards, Knight's saving grace is head-to-head modem play. Look for it in the MicroProse Classics CD too. (MicroProse; 800-879-7529; DOS, $21.95)



World War II

1942: The Pacific Air War

Your wingmen stick close as you prepare for battle.



If you've got the horsepower, 1942: The Pacific Air War looks spectacular.

If your flying dreams feature higher speeds and more firepower than a biplane can satisfy, World War II action may be just the ticket. The planes were bigger, faster, and more powerful, but dogfighting still called for pilot skill, not just fancy electronics.

1942: The Pacific Air War is the latest and best flight sim to exploit WWII as the perfect setting for up-in-the-air action. Pacific Air War uses much of the 3-D graphic technology developed for Fleet Defender, MicroProse's breakthrough F-14 simulation.

Unlike Origin's Pacific Strike, which appeared at about the same time in 1994 and requires a Pentium processor to do it justice, Pacific Air War performs respectably on more modestly powered machines.

On high-powered computers, Pacific Air War displays the Pacific Theatre in impressive graphic detail. Skillful shading and texture mapping creates satisfyingly realistic planes. The baby blue sky and delicate clouds convey a sense of endless serenity, while the churning waves below provide a constant reminder of the consequences of carelessness. The attention to detail extends down to the tiny plumes of water kicked up by bullets hitting the ocean's surface.

Whether flying for the U.S. or Japanese Navy, you'll find that each aircraft has an authentically detailed cockpit that remains functional even in the Virtual Cockpit mode, which simulates the pilot's ability to swing his eyes around and view the entire sky. You can switch to the rear gunner's position and even jump into the cockpits of the other planes in flight. The 10 available aircraft can also be configured with particularly realistic (read: difficult to fly) flight characteristics.

But Pacific Air War doesn't stop at just being a good flight sim. Its versatile flight recorder has editing capabilities, an excellent mission builder, and a Carrier Battle mode that lets you direct the actions of ships as well as planes.

Not surprisingly, all that power can make things a little daunting for novices. There's no "indestructible" arcade mode, and even with the realism factors turned way down, the planes tend to be squirrelly to fly. And 1942: The Pacific Air War is more strategy-intensive than most other flight sims. But that complexity will keep you flying after other sims lose their appeal.

MicroProse; 800-879-7529; DOS, $59.95

Flight Lessons: 1942: The Pacific Air War

- Don't try to climb too sharply after a carrier launch! These crates take time to gain altitude, so be patient or you'll almost certainly go into the drink. Also, be prepared to counter engine torque when you're using the Realistic flight model.
- Don't get lured into a close-in dogfight with a Zero when you're flying a Hellcat or Corsair; they're tough planes, but they can't match the Zeke's maneuverability. Hit-and-run 'em to death instead.
- When all else fails in the Carrier Battles, you can always plow a couple of bomb-laden planes into the enemy flattops, Kamikaze-style.

World War II Alternatives

Until 1942: The Pacific Air War came along, Dynamix's Aces of the Pacific and Aces over Europe were considered the standards for World War II flight sims. They're both a lot of fun and much easier to get into than Pacific Air War.

Both Aces games feature the same type of mission structure, user interface, and flight recorder as Red Baron, but Aces over Europe tweaked the flight models a bit and introduced a smooth higher-resolution VGA mode. Both are now available on CD-ROM, and the Aces of the Pacific CD also includes the WWII:1946 expansion disk. (Dynamix; 800-757-7707; DOS; DOS CD, $49.95)

It's not the newest, but the Aces line still pleases.

If you're into serious fun, fly with Chuck. Chuck Yeager's Air Combat from Electronic Arts is not technically a World War II simulation; it's a pure dogfighting simulator that lets you mix and match fighter planes from the World War II, Korea, and Vietnam eras. You can even fly historical missions from each era, all under the watchful eye of General Yeager himself.

It's a novel idea that was later mimicked by MicroProse's Air Duel and The Software Toolworks' Evasive Action, but neither of these titles is nearly as effective as Air Combat, which runs smoothly even on low-end machines. Look for it on EA's Top Ten Pak CD-ROM. (Electronic Arts; 800-245-4525; DOS CD, $49.95)

Jets

Falcon 3.0

Camels and Corsairs may be cute, but for the ultimate high-octane boost of techie testosterone, you need to go supersonic. And the decisive winner among modern flight sims is Spectrum Holobyte's Falcon 3.0.

Falcon hit the computer flight-sim community like a sidewinder missile, instantly creating a cottage industry for peripherals, utilities, support groups, and electronic squadrons fiercely devoted to the game.

Falcon first took off in 1987 on PCs, monochrome Macs, 16-color Atari STs, and Commodore Amigas. It has come a long way since then, spawning three expansion modules and a live-action videotape trainer.

In real modern warfare, you'll never get this close.

Falcon 3.0's heads-up display is your most critical piece of equipment.

What makes Falcon so popular? First of all, it's a highly accurate simulation of General Dynamics' F-16 Fighting Falcon, which not only is the finest lightweight dogfighter around, but also a potent ground-attack plane.

To help out beginners, the sim's Instant Action dogfight mode is fun and easy to use. The Red Flag training missions walk you through every aspect of fighter combat. Once you get your wings, check out several full-blown theatres of operation that require advanced strategic planning.

If you think you're Top Gun, test yourself against other hotshots with Falcon's multiplayer modem and network play. There's nothing like flying head-to-head against another person (or even five other people on a network) to humble a head that's swollen from thrashing computer-controlled opponents. And Falcon even runs respectably on a 386-based system.

A variety of expansion modules increase the sim's appeal. Operation: Fighting Tiger adds new weaponry, the futuristic Falcon FSX aircraft, complete command of wingmen's tactics, and new missions in three additional theatres. MiG-29 first appeared as an add-on to Falcon and later became a stand-alone product. It lets you pilot the former Soviet Union's hottest jet fighter for an extraordinary challenge in head-to-head play against the F-16. The Hornet: Naval Strike Fighter expansion adds the thrill of naval aviation, complete with carrier launch and recovery, in McDonnell-Douglas' F/A-18 Hornet. Art Of The Kill, a live-action video and 180-page companion book, puts the cap on the finest simulation suite this side of the recruiting station. The Falcon Gold CD-ROM includes the very latest version of all of these products in a single package.

Spectrum Holobyte; 800-695-4263; DOS, $49.95; DOS CD, $64.95

Modern Alternatives

Creating the definitive simulation of modern naval aviation had been an elusive dream until the release of MicroProse's Fleet Defender.

After gaining national attention in the movie *Top Gun*, the U.S. Navy's awesome swing-wing interceptor finally has a simulation worthy of its reputation. Outstanding graphics highlight the carrier-borne operations of the Navy's Oceana-based Tomcat squadrons. Fleet Defender Gold, an enhanced CD-ROM version that includes the Miramar-based squadrons, is also available. (MicroProse; 800-879-7529; DOS, $57.95; DOS CD, $59.95)

While it's as much science fiction as sim, Strike Commander from Origin Systems blew away the simulation market when it finally arrived in 1993. Set in the year 2011, Strike Commander centers on the international activities of a mercenary F-16 squadron. The revolutionary graphics really cry out for at least a 486DX2/66 and the melodramatic storyline doesn't disguise the questionable flight dynamics, but the game is an outrageously addictive, state-of-the-art feast for the eyes.

The CD-ROM version of Strike Commander is a significant improvement over the floppy release: Text is replaced by a voicetrack and you also get the Tactical Operations expansion module. (Origin Systems; 800-245-4525; DOS CD, street price $60)

Strike Commander is a flight of fantasy.

Flight Lessons: Falcon 3.0

- Speed is life. Learn it. Live it. If you need a quick fix, light the afterburner, roll inverted, and pull back on the stick. Voila! Instant airspeed without pulling negative Gs. Make sure you've got sufficient altitude, though, or you may "land" unexpectedly.
- Learn to use the Padlock view that locks your eyes on the enemy. It can be disorienting but it's invaluable in keeping the bad guy in sight.
- Just for kicks, look for the neon Elvis Lives sign outside Las Vegas, the giant faucet at the head of the Grand Canyon, and Godzilla menacing the Love Boat in the Korlie Islands.

Unconventional Aircraft

Gunship 2000

Your artillery's worst nightmare is Gunship 2000.

Load 'em up, then get 'em in the air.

Airplanes aren't the only kind of flying machine. Helicopters can do all sorts of things that fixed-wing planes simply can't, and Gunship 2000 from MicroProse lets you in on the action.

When the original Gunship came out for the Commodore 64 in 1986, not even MicroProse could have predicted the game's phenomenal worldwide popularity. Its simple approach to helicopter-based combat flying (not to mention *Apocalypse Now's* swashbuckling portrayal of the U.S. Army's 1st Cavalry Air Mobile Division) spawned an entire generation of electronic Rotor Heads.

Gunship 2000, released in 1991, offers not just one, but seven different helicopters and lets you take command of a five-'copter troop as it fights its way through hundreds of missions in the Persian Gulf and Central Europe. The topographical 3-D scenery isn't particularly realistic, but it's serviceable enough to navigate by as you grapple with your machine's flight and weapons controls.

You start with training and a brief stint as a Warrant Officer in charge of single-helicopter missions. After you receive your commission, you can select flight and campaign missions where you determine the mix of helicopters and ordinance necessary to complete the job. Your mission score and the possibility of promotion depend not only on how well you fly, but also on how well you manage the other aircraft in your patrol.

A remarkably realistic cockpit serves as the Reality Switch Screen, where you adjust the sim's realism and difficulty with the flick of a switch or twist of a knob. The efficiency of your co-pilot/gunner is also adjustable: He can handle weapons and countermeasures while keeping you informed of systems status and target/threat information in a digitized voice.

Gunship 2000 does a good job simulating the complex control system and cockpit workload of modern battlefield helicopters. It even permits—no, *demands*—that you learn autorotation, the skill of landing a helicopter with the main rotor disengaged from the power train.

An add-on scenario disk, Islands & Ice, enhances the game with a mission builder, better terrain, new weapons, and other equipment, as well as such new locations as the Philippines and Antarctica. The new Gunship 2000 CD-ROM includes the original game and the scenario disk.

MicroProse; 800-879-7529; DOS, $25.95; DOS CD, $39.95

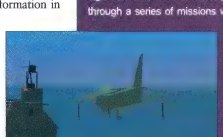
Flight Lessons: Gunship 2000

- Never try to land on a hillside or slope of more than 5 degrees–you're guaranteed to crash.
- Try and resist the temptation to take the Apache out on every combat mission. Sure, it packs the most firepower, but you'll score more points if you use a less intimidating machine.
- Learn to fly in Realistic mode as soon as possible. It's the only way to take full advantage of the helicopter's unique capabilities.
- Each theater has its own species of indigenous animals. See if you can find the water buffalo, camels, cows, and penguins. Don't shoot them, though. That would be wrong.
- Ignore that last tip. Blow the suckers away.

Alternative Alternatives

Nova Logic's Comanche: Maximum Overkill does for helicopter simulations what Origin's Strike Commander did for jets. Using a revolutionary new graphics system called Voxel Space, Comanche presents a startlingly realistic world in which to fly the Boeing Sikorsky RAH-66 Comanche, a 'copter that is still under development.

Just as the real Comanche is designed for simplified flight and maximum offensive potential, this sim lets you fly through a series of missions with increasingly overwhelming odds. It's really nothing more than a glorified, but glorious, shoot-'em-up. The Comanche disc also includes the Over the Edge add-on. (Nova Logic; 800-245-4525; DOS, $44.95; DOS CD, $49.95)



Super VGA Harrier gives you a feel for V/STOL.

But when you talk about unconventional flight, you're really talking Harrier—the ultimate in Vertical/Short Takeoff and Landing (V/STOL) aircraft. DoMark's Super-VGA Harrier isn't terribly pretty, but it's got a lot going for it in the strategy department. In addition to flying missions, you also serve as Task Force Commander in the game's single scenario. (DoMark; 800-695-4263; DOS, $54.95)

The Future of Flight

The sims we tested may be the best birds in the sky right now, but new competitors are taking off all the time. Several new flight sims are slated for delivery in late '94 and early '95, and they promise to bring the current generation down to earth in a hurry.

For starters, Version 5.1 of Microsoft Flight Simulator, due out early in 1995, will include new visibility effects that simulate dense fog as well as more and better clouds. New high-resolution ground textures taken from satellite images offer two-meter resolution—compare that with the 10-meter resolution in Version 5.0.

Flight Simulator will face some serious competition in '95, though. Master game maker Looking Glass Technologies is preparing to launch its own civilian flight simulator called Flight Unlimited. Even in an early version, the Super VGA graphics looked great. And Looking Glass promises hyper-realistic flight models, too.

World War I buffs can look forward to Origin Systems' Wings of Glory. It's been delayed again, but it looks to be a real killer in '95. And the dark horse here is Dawn Patrol from Empire Interactive, which will include spectacular graphics and several ways to enter the action. Watch for it in early 1995.

Fans of vintage planes will love DoMark's Confirmed Kill. Designed for both PC and Mac, it'll let you fly 15 different historical aircraft on a variety of missions, including pylon racing. The company also promises a chance to use flight models that are so realistic that only the best pilots will be able to take off and land, to say nothing about actually shooting something down. Look for Confirmed Kill in February of '95.

Dawn Patrol should be a WWI hit.

Top Gun splices video animation with flight-sim action.

Jet boosters will kick in the afterburners for Electronic Arts' new U.S. Navy Fighters, the first in a new series of sims due out by the end of '95. These flight-sim-with-a-plot titles are being designed by Brent Iverson, the man behind Chuck Yeager's Air Combat.

Sim leader Spectrum Holobyte isn't resting on its laurels, either. The new Top Gun, an entry-level flight sim based on the popular 1986 movie of the same name, will ship sometime in early '95. In addition to great in-flight graphics, you can expect live-action video and possibly a rock 'n' roll soundtrack taken from the movie. And everyone is waiting for Falcon 4.0. Spectrum says to expect much-improved, Super VGA graphics and an enhanced 3-D interface designed to help first-time pilots. But this jet isn't expected to depart until late in 1995.

—Christopher Lindquist and Fredric Paul

Make Your Mac Fly

Guess what? They actually make flight sims for the Mac! There aren't many to choose from, but the best of them rival or surpass their better-known PC-based counterparts.

Graphic Simulations' F/A-18 Hornet is the E² Ace of Mac-based flight sims. Beginners can get started by going through the sim's intensive flight training, and everyone will love the incredible graphical touches, such as the vapor trail of rockets as they curve away toward your target. If playing against the computer isn't challenging enough for you, multiple players can join in over a network.

F/A-18 brings Mac flight sims to a higher level.

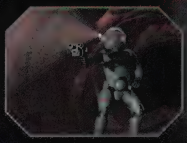
The sim is instrument-intensive, as is much of modern aerial warfare. Heck, you may never even see the enemy except as a blip on a screen. That's not a negative; that's reality. And it's that attention to detail that makes F/A-18 Hornet a challenging and convincing choice for your Mac. (Graphic Simulations; 214-699-7400; Mac, street price $50)

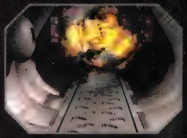
If you're looking for something a little different, take a look at Flying Nightmares from DoMark. This is basically the Mac version of Harrier for the PC, and was also the first shipping Power Mac game. Like the PC version, this sim combines top-notch flight characteristics with military strategy. You can jump from cockpit to cockpit within your squadron to get multiple views of the action, or step up a notch to plan and execute missions without ever touching a throttle.

The graphics are well done and the flight simulation suitably realistic—as evidenced by the difficulty of taking off and landing vertically in a Harrier. (DoMark; 800-695-4263; Mac, $47.95)

Beginners just want to have fun, so Chuck Yeager's Air Combat delivers the goods in a flash. Air Combat for the Mac is essentially the same game as the PC version. You choose from several WWII-, Korea-, and Vietnam-era warplanes and go head-to-head against opposing flyers in a variety of historical and user-configurable missions. Don't look for overly realistic flight physics or instrumentation, though. The game combines easy flying with minimal visual information to create an arcade-like, immensely enjoyable game. (Electronic Arts; 800-245-4525; Mac, $49.95) *—Anthony Lukban*

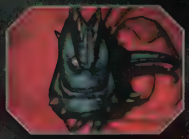
THE RULES ARE SIMPLE.

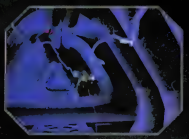


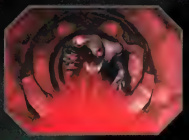


CREATURE SHOCK

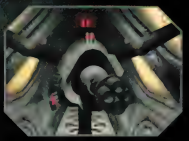
- Feel the double thrill of flight simulation and space shooter action as you lock on a Starfish Mine Launcher at the speed of light.
- High speed video compression runs terrifying 3-D animation at 15 frames per second to keep your pulse racing.
- Created by Argonaut, who brought you the Special FX chip in Nintendo's top-selling Star Fox™.

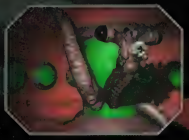






EVERYTHING'S OUT TO GET YOU.





It's 2023 and the Earth is dying. A survey ship, the SS Amazon, takes off to locate an alternative planet and disappears. Now, you must discover what hit it. Oh yeah, while you're at it, bring back an alien specimen, find its source and destroy it.

Just don't breathe too loudly--it might be tracking you. Something sure is. Man-eating slime pools? Artillery Spiders with twin-barreled lasers? Jellied Suckers that inhale entire ships? Or electric Distortion Rings that fry you to a crisp?

Or is it one of those really ugly things that we don't even want to mention?

AVAILABLE ON PC CD-ROM

ARGONAUT

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Falcon AT artwork by Spectrum Holobyte.

The Plane Truth

By James Daly

Five intriguing airplane programs let you get up close and personal with the fastest, most powerful flying machines in the sky.

We humans have never been entirely satisfied with the laws of gravity. Ever since our ancestors crawled out of the primordial ooze and stood upright on terra firma, we've eyed the birds soaring effortlessly through the skies with a burning envy.

These days it's easy to hop aboard an airliner and be free of our earthly bonds, but the real high-performance birds—supersonic combat jets, for example—are still out of reach. Until you boot up your personal computer, that is.

The latest PC and Mac airplane programs offer a first-hand look at everything from easy-going balloon rides to supersonic transport. You can watch video, check out specifications, and even manipulate models of the slickest, sleekest products of the aeronautical arts.

Not surprisingly, most of these packages concentrate on military aircraft and the myriad ways that they can turn their enemies into cinders and still get back to base in time for lunch. But there are plenty of vicarious aeronautic thrills to be had without explosions, too.

To see if we could tell a Cessna from an SST, we headed out to the electronic tarmac and grabbed onto the wings of five top flight-based packages: Arnowitz Studios' historical Daring To Fly! From Icarus to the Red Baron, Medio's personal Jets!, Maris' belligerent Warplanes, and Spectrum Holobyte's pilot-oriented Wild Blue Yonder. To satisfy those who can't get enough above-the-ground excitement, we also looked at Colorado Spectrum's Flight screen saver.

With these programs, you don't have to be a flight-sim fanatic or a hard-core propellerhead to let your imagination soar—even while your feet stay firmly planted on the ground.

Daring To Fly! From Icarus to the Red Baron

An excellent introduction to man's proclivity to soar is Daring To Fly! From Icarus to the Red Baron. The disc explores our seemingly endless desire to levitate through a detailed history of flight. It wings its way from the ancient myths and early aeronautic visionaries like Leonardo da Vinci, through the dawn of modern aviation with the Wright Brothers and World War I flying aces.

When you're talking flying machines, you want to feel the wind in your hair and the buzz of the yoke. This snappy title delivers with colorful graphics, more than two hours of narration, and almost an hour of rare historical video footage, including jerky black-and-white clips of the Wright Brothers' efforts and some cornball antics at early barnstorming airshows.

An early flying machine takes to the skies in Daring to Fly!

In Daring to Fly!, dreams of powered flight began in the ancient myths.

Daring To Fly! spins intriguing stories by combining pictures, movies, and text in a chronological sequence, but you can also go off in your own directions. Experience the story of the Red Baron as a slide show, for instance, or pause to explore related items, such as the methods of early aerial warfare. You can also conduct a word search, or return to a previous location before continuing on with the narrated story of the infamous aerial marksman. Good stuff. (Arnowitz Studios; 800-336-2947; Win CD/Mac CD, $59.95)

Test Flight: An easy soar through the early history of powered flight. Good starter package to get your wings flapping, but it may slow you down if you're raring to tear up the skies.

The unconventional reverse-wing design of the X-29A spices up Jets!

Jets!

If you've got a little more high-octane fuel in your blood, check out Jets! for a healthy dollop of screaming, gut-twisting, sky-tearing, high-performance aviation. From the early bullet-shaped X-1 to today's supersonic spy planes, you meet the machines, the pilots, and the scientists who have been ripping up the heavens for the past generation.

What's fun about Jets! is the way it works to humanize the pilots who flew these beasties. You'll discover, for instance, that super pilot Chuck Yeager got airsick on his first airplane ride. Or that Iven Kincheloe (who reached an altitude of more than 126,000 feet in the X-2) was so long and lanky that he could barely squeeze into the cockpit of most planes. The more than 30 minutes of video are particularly intriguing—especially a fascinating cockpit clip in which a test pilot's voice gets increasingly edgy as he struggles to pull his bird out of an ever-tightening earthward spiral.

In their efforts to enable us to go farther and faster, the brainiacs in the lab coats have come up with some bizarre flying creations. Jets! covers them all—from the reverse-wing design of the X-29A to the Orient Express, a passenger-packed stratosphere skimmer that looks like a huge flying Dustbuster. Another nice feature is the ability to watch early jets morph into later models as technology advances.

If you're eager to dig into the facts, Jets! also includes the full text of *The X Planes* by Jay Miller, and Richard Hallion's *Test Pilot*. But if you're just poking around for entertainment, page your way through hundreds of photos and check out the slick 3-D animations of planes that you can rotate with a click of your mouse. A nice, well-rounded package. (Medio Multimedia; 800-788-3866; Win CD, $59.95)

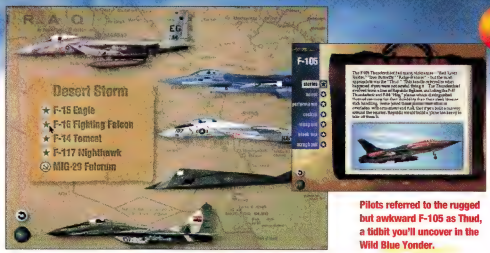
Test Flight: Gets under the skin of the pilots crazy enough to jump into these high-powered hunks of steel. Great video with a solid scientific perspective.

Warplanes

OK, I know what you're thinking, especially you flight sim fans. Flying is great, but it's a whole lot more fun if you can blast other

Air tactics enhance Warplanes.

Warplanes includes an exhaustive database of military aeronautics.



Wild Blue Yonder offers your choice of armaments.

Pilots referred to the rugged but awkward F-105 as Thud, a tidbit you'll uncover in the Wild Blue Yonder.

planes to kingdom come. Not to worry. Warplanes considers the airplane strictly in terms of its ability as a ferocious killing machine.

The first entry in a planned six-disc collection examines military aircraft in service since 1976, but the series will ultimately work its way backwards through World War I.

Volume one abounds with technical and historical detail about the aircraft used in the Gulf War, Arab-Israeli conflicts, and the Cold War. It supplies quick answers to the burning questions that have you lying awake at night: What is the top speed of the F-15 Strike Eagle? Which air tactics proved decisive in the Gulf War? How many types of nuclear-capable planes are there in South Korea's Air Force? Warplanes boasts a heavy-duty database with 1,300 full-screen photographs and more than an hour of video, as well as technical data on more than 500 aircraft and 200 weapons systems.

Several of the more prominent planes are featured in beautifully rendered 3-D models that are easily the best of all the flight packages we surveyed. A mouse click gives you a full 360-degree view of these sleek fighting machines. It's disturbing to realize they're quite beautiful— in a scary sort of way.

Another great Warplanes' feature is its well thought-out air tactics section, where you can see the strategy in how pilots go after other planes and make ground attacks. It adds a nice real-world dimension to what rates as the preeminent multimedia reference on military aircraft.

Warplanes also includes three simple flight sims that use the DoMark flight-sim engine. Hop into an A-10 Thunderbolt fighter, C-130 Hercules transport, or a Soviet Su-27 fighter and get your blood pumping. But after all that carnage only one of the three sims lets you shoot other airplanes out of the sky. Hmmph. (Maris; 800-336-0185; Win CD/Mac CD, $69)

Test Flight: An exhaustive examination of the planes designed to pound us into pulp. Best graphics of the bunch.

Wild Blue Yonder

Wild Blue Yonder follows the lead of Warplanes with an emphasis on death from above. The first in a three-part series focuses on the last 50 years of the jet age. Episode two will cover the Golden Age of aviation, from the Wright Brothers through the 1930s, and the focus of the third installment has not yet been determined.

Although Wild Blue Yonder has the most pedestrian interface of the five packages we examined, its content is ultimately the most satisfying. More than a roundup of metal and explosives, it aims to capture the soul of the men who flew the planes and recreate the tenor of their times. So in addition to photos and technical information on dozens of aircraft, you get interviews with the pilots, speeches from leading figures of the age, and period music from performers such as Charlie Parker and the Scorpions. When you're poking around the cockpit, a background audio track plays cockpit chatter among pilots and the sound of aircraft flying by. Nice touch.

Another plus is the disc's combat footage from Korea, Vietnam, and Desert Storm. The clips of the B-52 bombers dropping 70,000-pound payloads on North Vietnam are particularly chilling. (Spectrum Holobyte; 800-695-4263; Win CD/Mac CD, $49.95)

Test Flight: Good historical perspective, period music, and a clean analysis of dozens of aircraft more than make up for the ho-hum interface.

The sleek and mysterious B-2 bomber soars through Wild Blue Yonder.

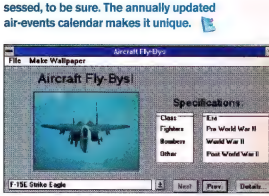
Flight

After all that scooting around the stratosphere, the Flight screen saver may seem a bit tame. But don't brush it off. The floppy-based program's scope is not as ambitious as the other packages, but it still hits its mark.

Flight offers you the chance to spruce up the mundane world of Windows with more than 40 images and 15 aircraft sounds. Hear a F4U Corsair roar to life when you open an application—or replace the Windows wallpaper choices with a close-up of a ferocious B-11 Flying Fortress bomber. Good nerdy fun.

If all these pictures give you a hankering for the real thing, Flight includes an air events calendar, which is updated annually. Select a time, geographical region, and an aircraft category and—voila!—a list of upcoming air events where you can thrill to the majesty of flight without leaving the comfort of the ground, or your beer cooler. (Colorado Spectrum; 800-238-5983; Windows, $29.95)

Test Flight: For the flight obsessed, to be sure. The annually updated air-events calendar makes it unique.



Fighter planes thunder to life when you open a Windows application with Flight.

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Hey, you!

The one vegetating in front of your PC. Electronic entertainment doesn't have to be limited to the confines of a 15-inch screen.

If you're hankering to rub elbows with some fellow technological travelers, but you prefer gazing into someone's eyes instead of tapping out missives on a glowing computer monitor, pull on some clean clothes and head out to a small but growing chain of coffeehouses, restaurants, and bars that combine personal interaction with technological flair.

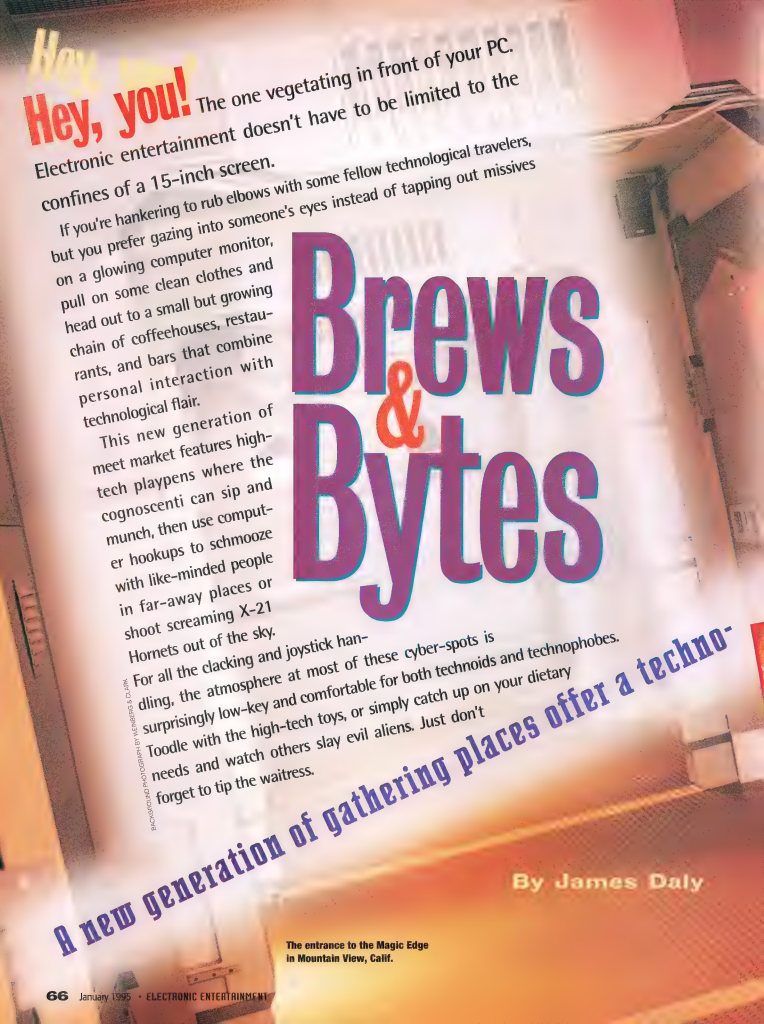
This new generation of meet market features high-tech playpens where the cognoscenti can sip and munch, then use computer hookups to schmooze with like-minded people in far-away places or shoot screaming X-21 Hornets out of the sky.

For all the clacking and joystick handling, the atmosphere at most of these cyber-spots is surprisingly low-key and comfortable for both technoids and technophobes. Toodle with the high-tech toys, or simply catch up on your dietary needs and watch others slay evil aliens. Just don't forget to tip the waitress.

Brews & Bytes

A new generation of gathering places offer a techno-

By James Daly



The entrance to the Magic Edge in Mountain View, Calif.

BACKGROUND PHOTOGRAPH BY KEVIN BERNE/SYGMA

Virtual World

Locations in Chicago; Dallas; Houston; Las Vegas; San Diego; and Walnut Creek, Calif. In Japan, locations in Tokyo, Kobe, Kyushu, and Yokohama.

Virtual World immerses guests in the fictional world of the Virtual Geographic League, a secret society dedicated to the discovery and exploration of other dimensions. Patrons become members of the League and wait in a Victorian lobby-cum-bar before climbing into individual pods to assume the roles of interdimensional tank jockeys.

Choose between two destinations: BattleTech, where you're at the controls of a giant walking tank and must annihilate your competitors in a glorious free-for-all, or Red Planet, where you race a hovercraft around the eerie canals of Mars. Either way, the price is $7 to $9 for a 30-minute experience—about 15 minutes of prep time, 10 minutes in the pod, and a 5-minute debriefing with video highlights of your mission. The Virtual World chain has also recently added SiteLink, a high-speed network that lets game players in one center do battle with competitors from other centers around the country.

When the game ends, you can rehash your action in a comfortable snack bar while cooling off over drinks and simple munchies. Virtual World is probably the most family-oriented of the cyber-bars, with kids of all ages bouncing through at any hour. Be prepared for traffic jams of adolescents on weekends.

At Virtual World, the drinks take a backseat to games of BattleTech.

logical twist to the standard burger-and-beer fare.

Icon Byte Cafe

299 Ninth St.
San Francisco
415-861-2983

Icon is primarily designed for the hip drinking-and-grazing crowd, but it also includes terminals where you can jack into the Internet and knock out an information request to the Louvre while snacking on a warm spinach salad. The atmosphere is utilitarian and sparsely furnished but projects a decidedly heavy dose of modern bohemia. San Francisco's celebrated Multimedia Gulch is nearby, so the techno-weenie quotient is high.

The inside design of Icon is post-nuclear-disaster chic: A rusty metal sculpture perches on the bar, and hunks of rewired, repainted, and re-created techno-debris line the walls. Remember how family-style restaurants used to have games on their place mats? Icon adds a contemporary twist by dappling the menu with computer talk—servings come in bits, bytes, and megabytes sizes. For dessert, check out the "Systems Overload" section. Of course, a bowl of clams is still a bowl of clams, whether or not you dub them "clams in a digital broth." Still, the food and service are both pretty good.

You'll have plenty to eyeball while you're at Icon: people pounding at the terminals, twisted pieces of old metal, and endless loops of computer-generated graphics and animation flashing on large video screens above your head. All to aid digestion, I imagine.

San Francisco's Icon: a bar with a high-tech theme.

ICON PHOTOGRAPHS BY ERIK KANE HAMERSKY

High Tech Cafe

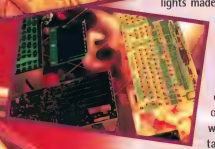
1950 Stemmons Freeway
Dallas
214-746-3673

If you simply can't bear the thought of clipping your electronic umbilical cord while you're out feeding your face at lunch, consider a stop at the High Tech Cafe.

This 150-seat eatery in Dallas's InfoMart immerses itself in all sorts of high-tech paraphernalia. Sections include smoking, nonsmoking, and modem ready. An old Sperry Univac mainframe serves as the maître d'hôtel, while dozens of overhead lights made out of old PC monitors provide illumination. There's also a crazy bit of electronic vegetation made out of old motherboards.

If that isn't enough, start paging through a menu that looks like a spreadsheet, and when your waiter (oops, I mean client-server) arrives, order up such delicacies as the "Florentine dip switch" and the "virtual burger" (made out of turkey). Then head over to the Space Bar and quaff a drink while you're playing Doom on one of the PCs located there. No word on how you're going to mentally assimilate yourself into the quiet confines of your office after spending your lunch hour chewing up demons with a chain saw.

The computer business is on the menu at the High Tech Cafe in Dallas.



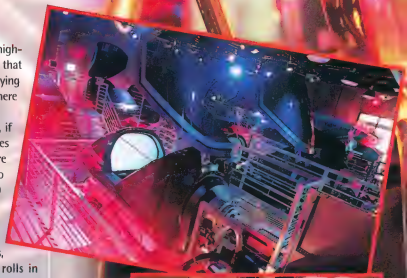
HIGH TECH AND MAGIC PHOTOS BY T. MARY WADE-OLSEN

Magic Edge

1245 Space Park Way
Mountain View, Calif.
415-254-5550

This is the first location-based entertainment setup to use high-powered Silicon Graphics workstations (the same machines that created the *Jurassic Park* dinosaurs), and it's a doozy. You'll be flying the X-21 Hornet, a supersonic dream machine that can zip from here to Honolulu in a heartbeat.

After forking over your $12.75 (and donning a real flight suit, if the mood hits), you're put through a 12-minute briefing in a series of rooms made to look like the guts of an aircraft carrier. You're then led to a networked group of a dozen pods. Strap yourself into a fully equipped cockpit, and away you go, tearing up to 40,000 feet, then battling other pilots in dogfights above a realistic graphic world of canyons, oceans, and bizarre rock formations. Each pilot wears a headset to chat with (or taunt) other aerial hotshots, and the entire pod pitches and rolls in response to your throttle.



MAGIC EDGE PHOTOGRAPHS BY WERNERS & CLARK

Magic Edge also features a 200-seat dining room and bar where a TV broadcasts sports events, current missions, and the flight schedule. The food is surprisingly upscale (seafood lasagna Florentine, for heaven's sake) and is best eaten after flying to avoid embarrassing in-flight spit-ups. The clientele is primarily young and primarily male, and the Silicon Valley headquarters of Sun Microsystems, Intel, and Silicon Graphics are just up the road, so the propeller-head factor can get pretty high, especially around quittin' time. Plan your trip accordingly.

Silicon Valley reluxes tuxedos flying virtual jets at the Magic Edge.

Entros

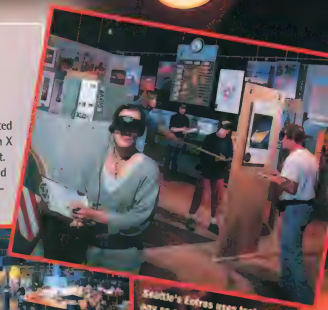
823 Yale Ave. North
Seattle
206-624-0057

Once you make it through the fake phone booth in the lobby of the converted bakery building, you enter a vast warehouse space where a casual Generation X crowd is indulging in a wide range of technology-assisted interactive entertainment.

Entros, a unique combination of upscale restaurant, hip nightclub, and "intelligent amusement park," features a revolving collection of technology-influenced games and activities designed for fun and mental stimulation. To keep things moving, a large staff of wisecracking game guides answer questions, assist beginners, and encourage players to work together.

The current five-part "show," called Spy by Night, introduces James Bond to Maxwell Smart and includes a life-size video game, a globe-trotting treasure hunt, and the popular MindShaft, a sensory obstacle course. Although the games sport high-tech trimmings, success depends on clever thinking, cooperation, and teamwork, not quick reflexes, and the whole operation emphasizes fun, not competition.

"We rely on the electronic highway without becoming a slave to it," says production manager Bill Moore, who also coordinates off-site interactive events. The biggest problem, Moore explains, is how to keep people entertained when they're done drinking and waiting in line to play the next game. Admission is $10 to $15, and dinner entrées range from $8 to $16.



Seattle's Entros uses technology as a means to create fun—not as an end in itself.

ENTROS PHOTOGRAPH BY STEVE MAYER

Electronic Cafe International

1649 18th St.
Santa Monica, Calif.
310-828-8732
(Internet: ecafe@netcom.com)

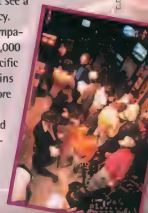
A modern-day successor to the Beat poetry houses of the 1950s, the Electronic Cafe International is a gathering place where people from all over the world come to stretch the boundaries of communal creativity. The Santa Monica site (just west of Los Angeles) is the flagship, but the Electronic Cafe has affiliates in some 40 locations worldwide, including such exotic locales as Rio, Toronto, Barcelona, and Hong Kong.

The Cafe is probably the most tech-heavy of all the cyber-bars, a place where the cheesecake and cappuccino take a backseat to sessions in which, for instance, cybernauts from as far away as Paris or Nicaragua chip in a verse to create a poem or work together to paint an electronic piece of art. Another day might see a video phone or teleconference setup used to discuss electronic privacy.

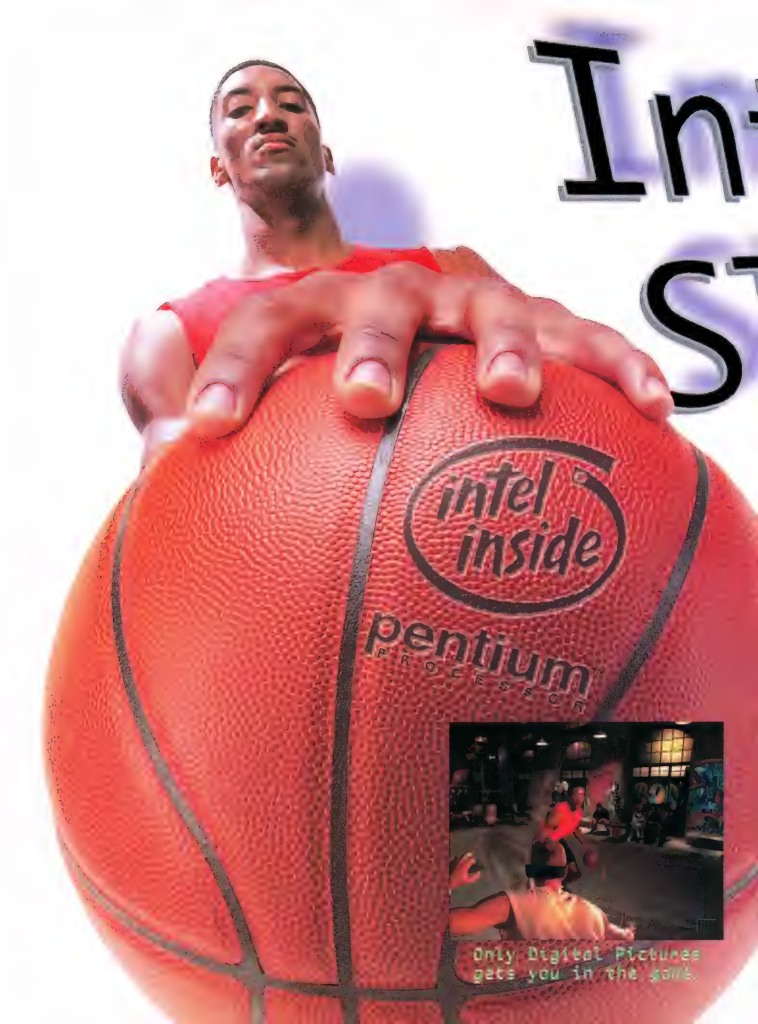
One event featured Graham Nash playing guitar in Los Angeles accompanied by Todd Reynolds on his fiddle in New York. Although they were 3,000 miles apart, the pair appeared together on the same screen thanks to Pacific Bell and Compression Labs. "Cyber-space is where the fun is," explains codirector Sherrie Rabinowitz. "It's important to say that we want to do more than download movies and purchase things over interactive television."

The Cafe attracts an eclectic group of computer people, poets, writers, and musicians attracted by the cross-pollination of talent and ideas. "People primarily come here to check out the world of multimedia and telecommunications," Rabinowitz says. "But our coffee is pretty good, too."

The Electronic Cafe International lets individuals around the world find and share the thrill of spreading cyber-culture.



ELECTRONIC CAFE PHOTOGRAPH BY ISABEL FRANK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Digital Pictures

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– PC Gamer, September 1994

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– Strategy Plus, September 1994

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– Electronic Entertainment, September 1994

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GUIDED TOUR

Take a Midnight Walk

Under a Killing Moon

Access Software's cutting-edge adventure comes to a screen near you.

By Christopher Lindquist

Tex Murphy is back and doing what he does best–saving the world. But in Under a Killing Moon, the Humphrey Bogart–meets–Don Rickles private investigator has his hands full–four CD-ROMs (two gigabytes) worth of new cases to crack.

Tex's digs are run-down and dated, and he's preoccupied with his misspent youth and his recent divorce. But you can always count on this shamus for top-notch adventure. This time around Tex must unravel a futuristic mystery while hunting for a variety of expensive baubles stolen from an even wider variety of attractive dames. That's not an easy assignment, especially when you report to the Great P.I. in the Sky himself.

Tex first hit the silicon screen in 1989 as a do-gooder gumshoe in Mean Streets. He appeared as both an animated character and a digitized still-image complete with a voice track. In 1991's Martian Memorandum, Tex emerged as a low-res "live action" character with a staccato step who led you on a clue-snooping escapade complete with voice-synched live actors.

Under a Killing Moon pushes the technology envelope once again with characters (played by real actors the likes of James Earl Jones, Brian Keith, Margot Kidder, and Russell Means) interacting in an elaborate 3-D world. The puzzles are more devious than ever, and instead of watching Tex (played by Access VP Chris Jones) schlep around your screen, you get a gumshoe's-eye view of the action. If you get stuck, an online help feature points you in the right direction.

All the enhancements have delayed the game for months, but now Tex is back–bolder and better and ready to save the world (again!). For clues on how to help him out, embark on our Guided Tour. You never know what secrets you might discover. (Access Software; 800-800-4880; DOS CD, $99.95)

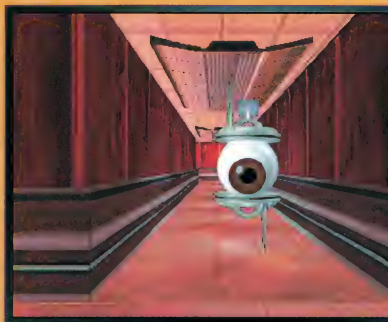
Ah, lovely Chandler Avenue, the place Tex calls home sweet home. Yeah, it's a little worn at the edges, but nothing a couple gallons of gasoline and a match couldn't fix.

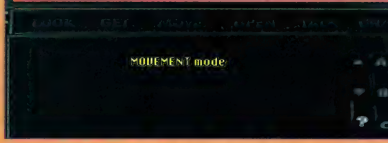
Chelsea's good for more news than what she sells on the stands. But while Tex may think of her as dating material, in her eyes he just doesn't measure up.

Nice view. Too bad there's no time to admire it. There may be a valuable artifact in here somewhere. Maybe one of those books can help.

The Colonel (played by Brian Keith) used to think Tex would make a pretty good investigator. Now he'd rather see Tex stay home and out of the way.

Someone has gone through the Colonel's office with a steam shovel. This place looks cleaned out, but maybe the vandals missed something. Looks like the Colonel's pottery collection is still intact.





Keep an eye out for the security probe—it's keeping an unblinking one out for you. Better run while you can!

Book Hintz has been feeling a little down in the snout. If Tex offers him the right deal, he may be willing to sniff out some useful new information.

San Francisco's venerable Coit Tower is looking a little tipsy these days. The view from the top is still a good one, though, and maybe Tex will meet some interesting folks on the way up.

Something fishy is going on at G.R.S. Research and Development. Check out the name plates. Hey, do you feel like you're being watched?

Rusty Clown's Novelty Shop has seen better days. Despite the schlock, the masks look pretty realistic, and that giant clown face looks rather interesting.

Tex could do worse than haunting this overpriced electronics shop. Thank the bank for plastic money, and don't miss the Blue Light Special.

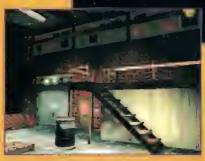
Franco Franco doesn't take lip from anybody. But Tex might be able to loosen up this jaded character by bringing him a gift.

Somebody cleaned out this sitting room before Tex got here. Maybe they left something useful behind? Hmmm, that chandelier looks as if it's still in one piece.

The Great P.I. in the Sky (played by James Earl Jones) regards our down-and-out gumshoe as a knucklehead who doesn't have what it takes to solve the case. It's up to Tex to prove him wrong.

Tex can't solve this mystery if he keeps his feet on the ground. Eventually he'll have to board this space station. That's where the party really starts, and he'd better remember to bring the chips.

The old Acme warehouse is in pretty good shape. Pay attention here, particularly to the top of the landing. It's key.



Thanks to Steve Witzel, vice president of marketing, and Mark Hulka, developer at Access Software.

Are you frustrated with your joystick cause its just not meeting the demands of your favorite PC games? Does it lack that extra thrust you need to overtake the enemy? Is it missing that pin-point accuracy and superior control? Well, don't get mad. Get LETHAL!

The Lethal Series by QuickShot is a new line of quality game controllers for the IBM and compatible PC. With features like built-in throttle control, positive response fire buttons, and high-speed turbo-fire capability, the Lethal Series will meet your need for speed, accuracy, and control. So experience the difference with the Lethal Series. * Shown above: QS201 Super Warrior (left) and QS203 Avenger (right) *

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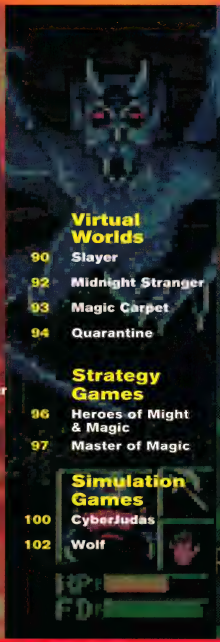

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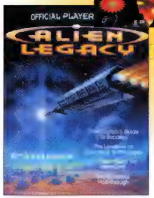
Booking on Game Guides

The major strategy-guide publishers have revved up the presses to bombard you with an array of books just in time for the holidays. If you're wondering why there are so many guides and what the titles like "Official" and "Authorized" mean, here's the scoop.



Book publishers are releasing a slew of game guides for the holidays. See sample listings on page 80.

Roger Stewart, Prima Entertainment Division publisher, says "The electronic game industry has really become a mass market phenomenon." Gaming is no longer the hobby of a small group of enthusiasts. There are lots of players and that drives game book sales.

But why do people buy game guides? Gary Masters, associate publisher at Sybex—the largest publisher of unofficial game guides—says that most buyers are seasoned players stumped by increasingly difficult games. "Game books are becoming more popular because games are becoming larger and much more complicated," Masters explains. "With Pong you didn't need a game book, but if you're playing X-Com, you'll need some help."

Ronald Resnick, vice president of books at Infotainment World, publisher of *GamePro* and *Electronic Entertainment*, estimates that 25 to 30 percent of people who buy a game purchase its hint book. For popular games like Doom and TIE Fighter, that adds up to a substantial number.

With big money at stake, publishers race to obtain licensing rights to the next hot title so they can release it first as the "Official" or "Authorized" guide. These tags are mostly marketing mumbo jumbo, but they can provide clues about what you'll find inside the covers.

"Official" or "Authorized" means that the publisher obtained the licensing rights to the game's intellectual property—copyrighted logo art and titles, such as *Star Wars* or *Star Trek*. Guides with titles that read "Ultimate" or "Unauthorized" were written without the game company's consent.

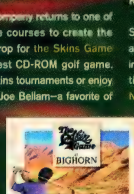
Official guides can have some advantages. These books are created in cooperation with the game developer. Hence, official books may have more cheats and secrets than an unauthorized book.

Don't ignore unofficial guides, though. "A lot of people are swayed by official books, but sometimes these are the worst ones because they are based on betas (prerelease versions of games)," says Masters. He cites Sierra On-Line's Outpost as an example in which large sections of the game described in the manual and strategy guide were never implemented in the final version.

—Bill Meyer

Scouting Report

The Griffin Fathom Company returns to one of California's premiere courses to create the photo-realistic backdrop for the Skins Game at Bighorn, its newest CD-ROM golf game. Players compete in skins tournaments or enjoy regulation play while Joe Bellam—a favorite of Mel Brooks—acts as your trusted, albeit wise-cracking, caddie. Return to CyberCity, the sequel to the Japanese cell-animation game Escape From CyberCity, is also due in January. Look for the CD-i, DOS CD and Mac CD as well as a Sigma Designs' ReelMagic edition with MPEG.



The Skins Game at Bighorn features photo-realistic courses and players.

Sony Imagesoft is planning to release more than a dozen Sega CD games to keep you busy during the holidays. In the group are several sports titles sponsored by ESPN, such as ESPN National Hockey Night and ESPN Sunday Night NFL, as well as a host of full-motion action/adventure video titles such as: The Exterminators, Frankenstein, and No Escape. If you like game shows or cute rodents, check out Jeopardy, Wheel of Fortune, and Mickey Mania: The Timeless Adventures of Mickey Mouse.

Sports fans and lovers of language should check out DoubleTalk, the Sports Version from B&E Games, available now. Players are challenged by a collection of homophone and homonym puzzles. Here's a taste: What similar-sounding words can mean both a Catholic payment for sin and a series of Major League baseball titles? Answer: penance/pennants.

Adventure game company Legend Entertainment has signed an alliance with Del Rey Books, a leading science fiction and fantasy publisher. Legend will base games on the original stories of Del Rey authors and Del Rey will publish books based on Legend games. Look for the latest Legend adventure game, Death Gate, bundled with an unpublished short story by Margaret Weis and Tracy Hickman, authors of the *Death Gate* book series.

X-Wing was one of the top-selling games of

(continued on page 80)

[ESPN BASEBALL TONIGHT]

versus

[The competition]

WE HAVE STATS.

THEY HAVE STATS.

WE HAVE "3-D RENDERED" MAJOR LEAGUE BALLPARKS.

THEY HAVE STATS.

WE HAVE ALL THE MAJOR LEAGUE TEAMS, AND ALL THE MAJOR LEAGUE PLAYERS.

THEY HAVE ALL THE STATS.

What good are stats if your players look like a bunch of mutants? ESPN Baseball Tonight is the first PC baseball game to combine great stats with all 28 major league teams, all the players, and great gameplay.

We filmed live players and digitized them into the game using 15,000 frames of player animation. So you'll see every detail, from the baserunner's nervous lead to the batter's depressed walk back to the dugout after he whiffs.

Super VGA graphics display the game in 256 colors — more than any other game. Even the management is realistic. You can trade, edit and change players' stats. With over 10 minutes of video highlights, instant replays and "live" commentary from ESPN's Chris Berman and Dan Patrick, this is the most realistic PC baseball game out there. If you don't believe us, our competition has plenty of statistics to prove it.

For PC CD-ROM and floppy disk. Also available for Super Nintendo, Sega Genesis and Sega CD.

EVERYTHING ELSE IS JUST PRACTICE.

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BOOKING ON GAME GUIDES-HOT PICKS

Here's a sample of the slew of strategy guides available for Christmas.

- **The 11th Hour**
  Official Strategy Guide–Prima
  11th Hour/7th Guest Companion–Sybex
- **Alien Legacy**
  Official Players Guide–Infotainment World
- **Armored Fist**
  Official Strategy Guide–Prima
- **Colonization**
  Official Strategy Guide–Prima
- **Dark Forces**
  Official Players Guide–Infotainment World
- **Doom II**
  Official Strategy Guide–Prima
  Warriors Guide to Doom II–Sybex
- **EarthSiege**
  Official Players Guide–Infotainment World
- **Falcon 3**
  Official Combat Strategy Book–Prima
- **Front Page Sports Football**
  Official Playbook–Prima
- **Kings Quest VII**
  Official Players Guide–Infotainment World
- **MechWarrior 2 The Clans**
  Official Players Guide–Infotainment World
- **Microsoft Space Simulator**
  Strategies and Secrets–Sybex
  Official Strategy Guide–Prima
  Authorized Pilots Guide–Infotainment World
- **Mortal Kombat II**
  Official Power Play Guide–Prima
  Official Players Guide–Infotainment World
- **Panzer General**
  Official Strategy Guide–Prima
- **Phantasmagoria**
  Official Players Guide–Infotainment World
- **Relentless**
  Official Players Guide–Infotainment World
- **TIE Fighter**
  Strategies & Secrets–Sybex
  Official Strategy Guide–Prima
- **SimCity 2000**
  Strategies & Secrets–Sybex
  Power, Politics, and Planning–Prima
- **Under a Killing Moon**
  Players Guide–Infotainment World
  Official Strategy Guide–Prima
- **X-Com UFO Defense**
  Official Strategy Guide–Prima
  Strategies and Secrets–Sybex

Prima Publishing
800-574-2332

Sybex Books
800-227-2346

Infotainment World Books
800-574-2332

(Scouting Report continued from page 78)

'93 and '94, so it's no surprise that LucasArts has released the X-Wing Collector's CD. It features six new X-Wing, A-Wing, and B-Wing missions–cranking up the mission total to 122–enhanced flight and ship graphics, and vocal tracks for more than 1,000 new studio-recorded mission briefings.

Thanks in part to America's love affair with expensive merchandise and nifty logos, hockey is enjoying somewhat of a renaissance in the States (lockout not withstanding). So be aspiring Gretskys, Accolade is releasing Brett Hull Hockey '95. It features Brett Hull and 600 of the game's other great players. If you're into fast machinery, but still love competition, look for Cyclemania from Accolade, featuring six different motorcycles and five treacherous roads filled with oncoming traffic, cycle cops, and lots of ambulances.

Dodge oncoming traffic and cycle cops in Accolade's Cyclemania.

In the mood for a ton of shareware? Spotlight Software, makers of The Entertainment Collection–the only major shareware game collection sold nationally in retail stores–is releasing 4000 On One. According to Spotlight, it has more programs on a single CD than any other product, including 200 games. Expect quantity, if not quality.

Way of the Warrior Fatalities

Ninja

Disembowel: Sweep from Down-Back to Back, and press A and C.
Death Zap: Sweep from Down to Down-Forward, Left Shift, and press A.

Major Gaines

Super Suplex Toss: Taunt, get up close, press A, and Left Shift.
Back Breaker: While pumped up, move close, and hit Right Shift.

Shaky Jake is a real whiz with his staff—if you know the right moves.

Shaky Jake

Staff Impale: Charge Back, press Forward to get close, and hit Left Shift.
Barbecue: Sweep from Down to Down-Forward to Forward, and hit C and Right Shift.

Dragon

Power Kick: Get up close, Taunt and sweep Down, Down-Back, Back, and hit C and Right Shift.
Head Slap: Charge Back, press Forward, get close, and hit Left Shift.

Nikki Chan

Blow Off: Charge back, hit C and Right Shift.
Heart Breaker: Up close, hit A, B, and C.

Nobunaga

Sword Decapitation: Spin from Down to Down-Back to Back, and hit Left and Right Shift.
Slice in Half: Charge Back, press Forward, and hit Left Shift.

Fox

Impale: Spin from Down to Down-Forward to Forward, and hit A, B, and C.
Overhead Smash: Taunt, press Forward to get close, and hit A and Left Shift.

Crimson Glory

Back Break: Taunt, press Forward to get close, and hit Right Shift.
Head Explode: Spin Down, slide Down-Back to Back, then hit A, B, and C.

GO AHEAD. PLAY FOOTBALL IN THE HOUSE.

NFL FOOTBALL TRIVIA CHALLENGE

The ultimate game for the armchair quarterback is coming this fall to your CD-ROM drive! Put your knowledge of the game of football to the test — are you a Rookie, a Pro or a Veteran? Choose your team and your conference (AFC or NFC), and try to gain yardage by answering multiple choice questions about Hall-of-Famers, Super Bowls, rules — over 1,500 NFL approved questions. Answer correctly — the crowd goes wild! But a wrong answer could get you booed off the field, or even sent to the showers! There's live-action video and photographs from NFL Films, a packed stadium, a locker room, commentary from Pat Summerall and Tom Brookshier — the whole pro football experience, and you don't even have to get out of your chair!

(Sorry. No blimp.)

Available for PC, Macintosh, Sega CD™ and CD-i.

MPC™ Multimedia PC

PHILIPS INTERACTIVE MEDIA

Team NFL

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Sid Meier's Colonization

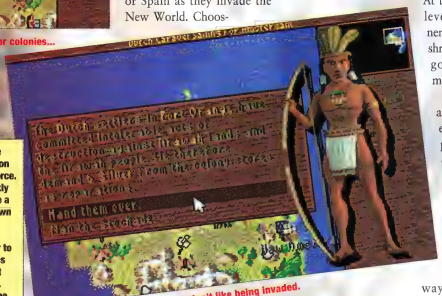
By Barry Brenesal

A generic home port is where you buy and sell goods and pick up immigrants.

How do you top an ultrapopular strategy game? If you're MicroProse, you don't even try. Instead, you clone the concept into a new arena. Meet Sid Meier's Colonization, the successor to Civilization, in which you attempted to build an entire civilization from the dawn of history.

There are plenty good sites for colonies...

You begin Colonization in 1500 A.D., leading the forces of England, Holland, France, or Spain as they invade the New World. Choosing different governments brings different benefits: The English, for instance, get more immigrants than anybody else, which lets them build up colonies faster. The more aggressive Spanish, on the other hand, have an easier time colonizing by conquest.



...but watch out for natives, who don't like being invaded.

Unlike Civilization, Colonization presents no barbarian hordes to worry about—just eight Native American tribes spread across the dozens of villages that dot the horizon. Friendly at first, they grow alarmed as you expand, fortify, and ignore their presence. Raids may follow, and the tribes' knowledge of terrain can make travel hazardous for new immigrants and existence tenuous for young colonies.

If all you had to face were the locals, life would be tough enough, but you also have to contend with three rival world powers. They pop in suddenly and order you off the land you've occupied for years. Anger them, and they attack your stockades, blockade your ports, capture your cargoes, and place missionaries in nearby native villages to denounce your activities.

So, what do you do? Bludgeon your enemies into nonexistence a la Civilization? Not likely. You can't attack their home provinces, so defeating them simply means they'll pop up again somewhere else. Wearing them out can take some time: At the game's higher levels, your opponents are extremely shrewd, and they've got looooooong memories.

Internal affairs aren't always rosy, either. Your home port provides cheap labor and goods at first, but taxes and prices gradually rise to extortionist levels. Of course, you can always stop trading with the motherland, but the real solution is to declare independence. Suddenly, the Crown is the enemy, and you find yourself courting rival powers to find an ally. Make the revolt stick, and you receive a hefty bonus when the year 1800 rolls around and the game officially ends. (If you're still having fun, you can go on playing after the score is totaled—and even avoid declaring independence—but you stop earning points at the beginning of the 19th century.)

Like any good strategy game, Colonization requires a mix of luck, savvy planning, and detailed resource management. Where you put a city determines whether it will specialize in trade,

TIPS

- **Even a single mounted dragoon is a powerful force. He moves quickly and can subdue a rival's entire town all by himself if there are no defending militia. All the city's inhabitants will then come over to your side.**
- **Send out a scout as soon as possible after your first landing to survey the continent. There are hidden treasures in the land you want to find before your rivals do.**
- **Place your colonies in close proximity: two to three squares between sites. The surrounding landscape will determine their production characteristics, and you'll need to move supplies and specialists between locations to complete vital buildings.**
- **Settle close to the edge of the map so that your ships have quick access to a European port.**
- **To maximize production, move complementary specialists to the same town: a lumberjack and a carpenter, a trapper and a fur trader, and so on.**

cash crops, or lumber and/or ore for building materials and weaponry. A well-chosen site can make the difference between New York, New York, and New York Mills, Minnesota.

Once you pick a site, you have to add buildings. Different types of structures bolster your defenses, increase the rate of immigration, or boost the production capabilities of specific industries. Others help generate liberty bells that let you build larger, more efficient colonies and gradually add the all-important founding fathers—from a supplied list of historical figures—to fill out your constitutional congress.

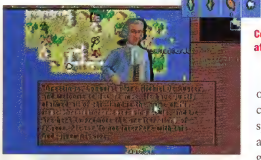
Each founding father (or Mother, in the case of Pocahontas) comes with certain advantages. Magellan, for instance, gives all your naval vessels an extra movement point. Choose La Salle, and all colonies automatically acquire a stockade. You pick each founding father from one of five categories—trade, religious, exploration, political, or military. The founding fathers you choose shape your approach to the New World—and to winning the game.

Other key individuals are the experts, who perform selected tasks with two to three times the efficiency of free colonists and indentured servants. There are 25 kinds of these specialists available. You can buy their services at wildly inflated rates from the Old World, wait for them to randomly turn up as immigrants, or create your own with training in schools, colleges, and universities. Of course, training specialists takes time, and the trainer is not available for other tasks.

Sound complex? It is—delightfully so for strategy gamers. And we haven't even gotten to the 16 kinds of cargo you can buy, produce, and sell or the 21 types of terrain to explore. Colonization's 300 years cram in as much activity as Civilization's 4,000. You'll spend plenty of time managing your colonies and goods with the aid of various reports, although the game is obliging enough to warn you when stocks of important supplies (such as food) begin to run low.

The game is well balanced, which is extraordinary considering the level of detail. On the other hand, the game's dynamics are a little shaky. Civilization develops smoothly by incrementally adding new elements—from power plants to battleships; Colonization's implementation is static by comparison. Nearly everything you want is available from the beginning, and if you manage to knock off some gold-rich Aztec cities, you can afford it all right away. And while the period music lends atmosphere, the visuals do not. Colonization's low-res graphics and dull color palette add little to the experience. Enter any Colonization city, and you see identical tiny, dark brown 2-D sketches of completed buildings jumbled at random over a light brown background. Not exactly an inspiring skyline.

Colonies are even less exciting to look at than Civilization's cities.



Just when you thought the New World was yours, the French show up.

That Colonization comes alive in spite of barely adequate graphics is testament to its overall quality. Its strong artificial intelligence, strategic complexity, easy configurability, and remarkable balance make Colonization a product whose challenge can't be resisted.

Sid Meier's Colonization
MicroProse
800-579-7529

Platform: DOS
Requires: 386, 1MB RAM, MS-DOS 5.0, VGA
List Price: $59.95

GAME PLAY:	★ ★ ★ ★
GETTING STARTED:	★ ★
GRAPHICS:	★ ★
SOUND CHECK:	★ ★ ★ ★
VALUE:	★ ★ ★ ★ ★

This Civilization follow-up is low on graphics but plenty high on variety, configurability, and game balance. A must for strategy gamers.

TIPS

- You've found a treasure cache, but it takes a galleon (which you don't have) to move it back to Europe for credit. No problem: Just set up an improvised colony on the nearest coast and move the gold inside. The Crown will offer to pick it up for a large fee. Do this a couple of times and spend your rewards on a galleon for the next occasion.
- That privateer you own is supposedly untraceable, but your rivals know better. Avoid attacking any world power you don't want to hit you back.
- A couple of dragoons can wreak havoc among the Aztecs. It'll take time, but you'll reap a large fortune as you destroy city after city.
- Try to locate at least one colony on a thin strip of land that automatically gives it two ports. That'll frustrate blockading frigates on one side that can't chase your ships out the other side.
- Keep on good terms with at least one of your world rivals. You'll need them when you finally declare independence and all trade with the motherland is cut off.

Wake of the Ravager

By Al Giovetti

DOS CD
DOS

Athas is a bleak, foreboding world—and it's getting bleaker. Defiler magic is sucking the life force out of all living things on the planet, threatening to leave nothing but the dead husk of a desert world.

The power of these defilers transforms evil men into dragon kings: gnarled and twisted vessels of raw power. As the leader of a party of four adventurers, you must stop the dragon kings from taking over the town of Tyr.

Wake of the Ravager is the second incarnation of Strategic Simulations' latest game engine, first seen in the popular Dark Sun: Shattered Lands. This massive, plot-rich sequel is based on TSR's (creator of the original Dungeons and Dragons) Dark Sun series of books and paper-based role-playing games.

Beware the power of defiler magic in Wake of the Ravager.

Lord Warrior is but one of your many adversaries.

The new game adapts TSR's tried-and-true rules and game play, rich history, and combat-and-magic system to create an engrossing adventure that has a flair rarely seen in computer games. Wake of the Ravager plays the way a good book reads, with complex character development and plenty of conflict and mystery to keep the story moving.

Choose the characters for your party from a preset list, or generate your own hearty band. You can even transfer your favorite characters from Shattered Lands into the game. That's especially useful if you've created Shattered Lands characters that possess magical weapons—Wake of the Ravager has few such weapons, so they'll come in very handy.

Wake of the Ravager offers two modes of play. During combat you see each opponent and adventurer; while adventuring you see only the lead character. You can also set the difficulty level of the game's turn-based combat system depending upon your skill and preference. And you can choose from more than 200 spells, which add colors and sounds to the onscreen action.

You carry on conversations between characters by selecting from a menu of choices; the conversation text appears at the bottom of the screen. Game settings, spell casting, and character stats pop up in additional windows. The cumbersome inventory screen pops up in yet another window. Unfortunately, the game doesn't support more than one onscreen pop-up window at once, which forces you to spend time constantly opening and closing windows.

Wake of the Ravager comes on floppy disk and on CD-ROM. The CD version delivers great speech, sound effects, and music, but this makes it very complicated to load the game. That's because Wake of the Ravager requires a whopping 620KB free conventional memory, and the CD-ROM version requires you to load the CD-ROM drivers in order to play. Bring out the boot disks!

Still, if you can get past the technical challenges, you'll discover a plot- and combat-filled game with enough style to satisfy even the most demanding role player.

TIPS

• **In the Temple of Tyr, penetrate the inner circle of defenses by shooting an arrow at the switch in the upper right corner.** • **In the ringing mountain, kill only Draxans. Protect the brightly colored Verini.** • **Use magic arrows purchased from the halfling in the third tree west of Tyr to kill enemies. Do so one at a time and from far enough away to avoid direct combat.** • **If outnumbered, conjure up a single monster to distract the enemy.** • **In the Verini temple, volunteer to get the ruby after the seal is broken.** • **In the Soul Shard tapestry, place shards of glass on the Chandelier of Ancestry while in battle.** • **Don't use the word *you* when talking to the Sultan.** • **The hero's fountain, in the underground Yuan-Ti tunnels, can resurrect elves.** • **Enter a hole in the ground just northwest of Tyr to find a pit containing magic boots.**

BUGS

While the animation sequences are mostly smooth, some slow down or become jerky if you select the wrong sequence of events.

Wake of the Ravager
Strategic Simulations
800-245-4525

Platform: DOS CD, DOS
Requires: 386/33, 4MB RAM, VGA, mouse
List Price: $80

GAME PLAY:	★ ★ ★ ★
GETTING STARTED:	★ ★ ★
GRAPHICS:	★ ★ ★ ★
SOUND CHECK:	★ ★ ★ ★
VALUE:	★ ★ ★

The Wake of the Ravager offers well-written, stylish role playing, once you get over some technical hurdles.

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Relentless: Twinsen's Adventure

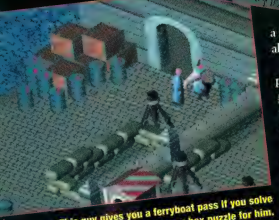
By Rick Raymo

The words new and original ought to be sacred. Instead, gamers are continually subjected to "new" Doom clones and "original" Sim-somethings. There are many times when you just want to cry out in frustration for something that's both different and fun.

Jump carefully, Twinsen.

Fortunately, Relentless: Twinsen's Adventure, from Electronic Arts, delivers on its promises. This action/adventure game features outstanding graphics, great puzzles, plenty of fights, a seriously awesome quest, and—best of all—true originality.

The action takes place on a small planet at the outskirts of a remote galaxy. You play Twinsen, a young member of the Quetch race, who is expected to fulfill a prophecy. Doing so requires you to collect several magical objects. With these objects, you can overthrow Dr. FunFrock, the local tyrant; save your world; and rescue your significant other. All in a day's work, right?



This guy gives you a ferryboat pass if you solve an easy box puzzle for him.

The game was designed by France's Adeline Software, which employs some of the same fine folks who brought you the first Alone in the Dark game (they had nothing to do with the sequel). This crew knows its polygons—and how to use 'em. Thanks to Goraud shading and isometric views, you play in a wonderfully textured surreal environment with a sensational 3-D look and feel.

Using only the keyboard, you can control Twinsen's physical and emotional states as well as his movement. Hit the space bar to initiate conversation, start a search, and manipulate objects. You can select from four attitudes depending upon the circumstances: Normal sets Twinsen moving at a walking pace, Athletic gives him the energy to run and jump, Aggressive sends him looking for a fight—complete with kick-and-punch-based attacks, and Discreet lets Twinsen tiptoe, crouch, and hide.

You set out on your quest, traveling about via foot, boat, car, and air. The activity is continual: You talk to people, get into fights, complete puzzles, and figure out where to go next. You collect items and powers such as magical protection, weapons, books, keys, gas for vehicles, and even a jet pack. There are 40 unique locations, but the game is nonlinear, meaning you can visit and revisit locations in whatever order you choose. It may take you 70 hours or more to complete the game.

Run whenever a soldier yells "Bail!"

Relentless, while great fun, is not without faults. You may have to start your machine with a boot disk if you use an expanded memory manager. Another annoyance is the fact that you can't save the game where you want; you have to wait for the game to save itself automatically at various milestones. This can be a nuisance if you want to quit between milestones and pick up where you left off later. You'll spend considerable time redoing areas that you nearly completed. In addition, the controls take a while to get used to (although it's worth the effort). Lastly, the game could have taken better advantage of the CD-ROM medium to add more speech and sound effects.

But even with its imperfections, Relentless is an amazingly enjoyable experience. It's chock-full of action, discovery, and exploration.

Relentless: Twinsen's Adventure
Electronic Arts
800-245-4525

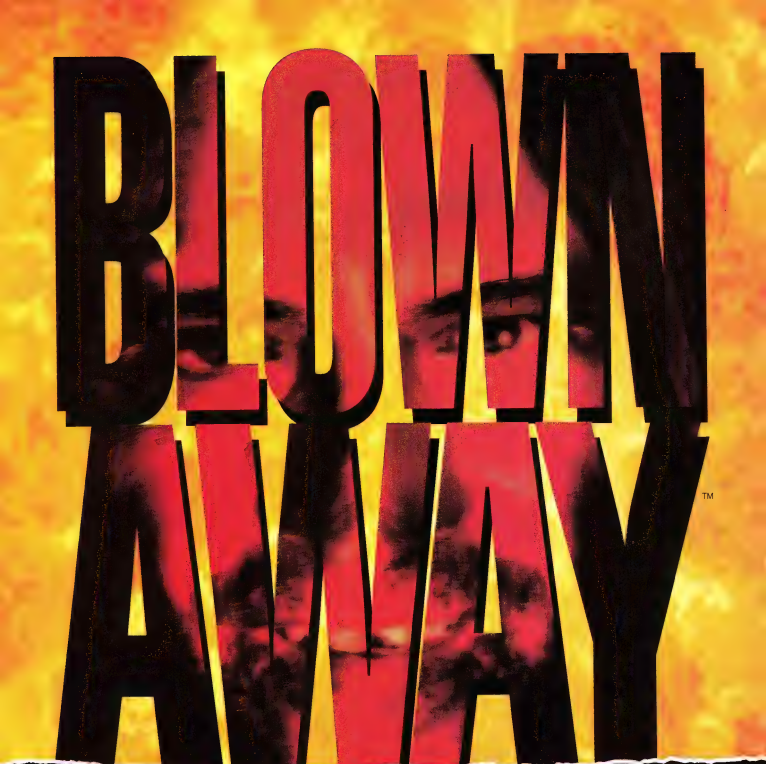
Platform: DOS CD
Requires: 486/25, 4MB RAM, MS-DOS 5.0, Super VGA, Sound Blaster
List Price: $59.95

GAME PLAY:	★ ★ ★ ★
GETTING STARTED:	★ ★
GRAPHICS:	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
SOUND CHECK:	★ ★ ★
VALUE:	★ ★ ★ ★

Relentless is a visual orgy—a truly spectacular experience for fun-seeking gamers, despite a few warts.

SPIN-TIPS

• Search every flowerpot and trash can for goodies. • Spend most of your time in Athletic mode. You can run away if you have to. • Read all the signs and talk to everyone who's not attacking you. • You can stock up on money by entering and exiting near cash registers. • Get the red syrup before leaving your home island. • When you get to the desert and make it safely to the shore, kill the guard by the gate. He's got the key. • In the second dungeon below the desert, avoid the log and jump over all holes (if you fall in, start over). Switch order is: middle lever once, right lever once. • Get your own boat. Then you don't have to depend on the ferries.



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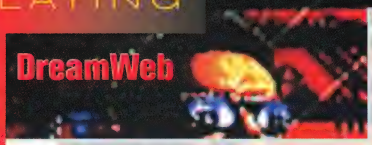
DreamWeb



By Al Giovetti

DOS
DOS CD

DreamWeb is the place where our nocturnal wanderings take shape in the subconscious. Here, dreams don't progress freely, but can be influenced—for good or evil—by those individuals who possess the power of the Node. And now seven baddies have gained this power.

DreamWeb, the new game from Creative Reality, is an adventure set in a dark, high-tech future. Electronic door keys control elevator and building access and lethal, electronic surveillance systems keep the criminal element at bay. This unsavory world is home to your alter ego, Ryan, a young man whose 26th birthday is marred by horrendous nightmares. Determined to find their cause, Ryan buys a gun and starts hunting down the evil men who have corrupted the Web.

A unique inventory screen lays everything out for you.

Dark, grainy visuals and some slick with rain. Don't forget your sunglasses.

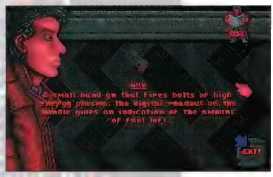
As Ryan, your quest takes you to some 250 locations—in which you can search for clues and interact (and fight) with other characters. Along the way, you'll encounter enough sex and violence to make a Schwarzenegger movie—a fact that earns the game a "no-one-under-age-14" warning label.

Whenever the action stops, you'll see a description of your current location. Conversing with other characters is quick-and-dirty—consistent with the game's view of the impersonal far future. In fact, the network computer is the most talkative character you'll meet.

The game employs an overhead perspective that's rare in American games but popular in DreamWeb's native Europe. As in many European games, the graphics are beautiful, and you can magnify the dark, grainy images to ease the search for clues.

Those clues are critical. DreamWeb's 20 treasure-hunt and graphical puzzles are tough. You'll find yourself constantly reviewing what you know in an attempt to solve the next puzzle. Fortunately, there are often multiple ways to solve a given puzzle.

As you move from location to location, the music changes, and the unusual digital sound effects, including digitized speech, are effective if not groundbreaking. When you reach a key point in the plot, you'll be rewarded with one of a dozen animated cut scenes that serve to advance the story. The cut scenes maintain the flow of action by using the same graphics as the rest of the game, instead of switching to more glossy rendered images.



You can pick up, use, or open the objects you see in the examine screen.

On the negative side, DreamWeb can save only seven games, which is too few for a complex adventure game. But apart from this minor complaint, DreamWeb is graphically appealing and intellectually challenging. It's well worth a look.

DreamWeb
Empire Interactive
800-216-9706

Platform: DOS, DOS CD
Requires: 386, DOS 3.0, 590KB RAM
List Price: $59.95

GAME PLAY:	★ ★ ★
GETTING STARTED:	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
GRAPHICS:	★ ★ ★
SOUND CHECK:	★ ★ ★
VALUE:	★ ★ ★ ★

DreamWeb is an attractive, entertaining—and tough—game suitable for any graphic-adventure fan.

TIPS

• In the hotel, use the axe on the floor to kill the first guard, then shoot the next one. • Go to Sparky's bar and be nice to your boss to get some cash. • Don't hesitate to shoot electrical panels and guards, but don't pass up more imaginative means of destruction when available.

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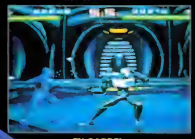

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Slayer

By Jason D'Aprile

Most role-playing games like to think big. They typically involve an epic campaign to save the realm, the world, or even the entire universe. Usually these entities need saving because some terrible form of evil and darkness has returned to pillage, murder, destroy, and make things generally unpleasant for the people who live there.

Countless critters await in the dungeons of Slayer.

If you're tired of these hackneyed story lines and just want to dish out some mindless mayhem on your 3DO machine, you'll love Slayer. The latest action/adventure game from Strategic Simulations dispenses with formulaic situations in favor of using "dungeon seeds" to generate up to four billion random dungeons. You run through these dungeons in real time, with only one goal: Seek and destroy (and avoid being destroyed)—and then do it all over again.

Puzzle lovers, go away; gamers who like to waste time with idle prattle need not apply. Of course, there are traps to avoid and a lot of teleporters to play with, just to keep things interesting. But with no large-scale goals, Slayer is for role-playing exterminators. It bears as much resemblance to Doom as it does to Dungeons and Dragons.

In Slayer, you are a lone adventurer. You either create your identity from scratch or choose from a

TIPS

- **Beware when around teleporters. Monsters can use them too.**
- **The best combat approach is to hit and run. Hack the monsters, then quickly step back as they try to attack you. If the monsters use spells or other distance attacks, keep a wall handy to hide behind.**
- **Hard mode combines with the Too Many monster setting will give your character the most experience points quickly, but it's best to start a new, low-level character on an easier setting, then build him up through different types of dungeons.**
- **Fighters are better off with a weapon in each hand instead of worrying about a shield. The loss in armor is more than balanced by the extra damage you'll do.**
- **Magic users should keep their most-used spell ready in the spell book for instant access.**

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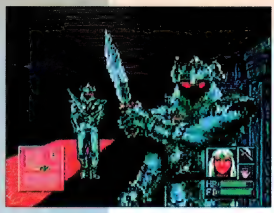
vast assortment of pregenerated characters. Your first-person perspective moves quite quickly, which can make it easy to get confused. You can look up, look down, and even crawl. Indeed, you'll need to engage in all of these activities because Slayer's dungeons have depth to spare.



The odds are against you, but you've got some tricks up your sleeve.

Inexplicably, Slayer places only two types of monsters on each level. The creatures get more difficult as you climb, though, and the game's fast pace keeps things from getting boring—especially in those areas infested with monstrous Lichs. Coming across three or four of those guys at once is almost enough to make you turn back and play something wimpy like Wolfenstein.

Slayer makes good use of the 3DO controllers, and it boasts an incredible sound track and atmospheric effects. The sound of monsters slinking through the hallways around you is downright spooky.

Slayer's biggest failing is its appearance. 3DO graphics should be stellar, and these are not. They're not really bad, just sort of similar to what you might see on the PC—with a gritty, pixelated look. But even without dazzling graphics, Slayer is still an excellent game. Game play is varied, monsters abound, and control is simple and sure. Most important, Slayer is a lot of fun. And for 3DO owners in search of mindless fantasy action, Slayer is the only game in town.

Slayer
Strategic Simulations
800-245-4525

Platform: 3DO
List Price: $60

GAME PLAY:	★ ★ ★ ★
GETTING STARTED:	★ ★ ★ ★
GRAPHICS:	★ ★
SOUND CHECK:	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
VALUE:	★ ★ ★ ★

Slayer is the answer for role players tired of saving the world. The practically limitless game play and fantastic atmosphere make up for so-so graphics.

It's time to bring these guys down to earth.

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Midnight Stranger

By James Daly

Care to get in the middle of this discussion?

New York is fine. I'd rather stay.
I get allergic smelling hay.

When Eva Gabor sang these immortal words at the beginning of each "Green Acres" episode, it's pretty clear she wasn't thinking of the world of Midnight Stranger.

Midnight Stranger plops you into a seedy section of a bustling metropolis. Your task is to travel to nearly two dozen locations and deal with the bizarre characters you meet. They're not an entirely pleasant lot, made up of spaced-out artists, self-effacing comedians, angry ex-cons, and other shrink bait. But you'll need their help as you try to untangle a bizarre plot that involves murder, aliens, and smuggled artifacts.

Chow time.

Get to know some of the locals.

What'll it be, bub?

Navigation is simple. After watching a brief introduction, you move the mouse pointer around the screen. When the pointer changes to a word such as 'Go' or 'Talk' or 'Exit,' just click to activate that command.

The game's video-based action is shown from your perspective, and characters address you directly. They react to the tone of your communication, which you control on a colored mood bar that serves as a clever alternative to choosing between canned response lines. Click on the red area to be abrasive, the green to be neighborly, and somewhere in-between to feel things out. The characters talk from small QuickTime rectangles that animate only heads and shoulders while the rest of the image remains motionless. There is little attempt to merge the still and moving images, so occasionally a person caught in mid-gesture will have three hands or dancers will leave their legs behind.

Midnight Stranger does a good job approximating the fickle winds of human interaction. A conversation can turn violent, titillating, or criminal, depending upon your disposition. Give the wrong impression right off the bat, and there is no making amends. Here's the kicker: The game never plays the same way twice. A weird response to a character's question may be just a pleasant chat in one game and elicit a brush-off in the next. And sometimes conversation will turn strange for no reason.

The disc also marks the debut of what developer Gazelle Technologies calls Virtual Intimacy. Sound intriguing? Well, get that idea out of your head. Virtual Intimacy simply consists of having a woman move really close to your video window and pretend she's kissing you. Kinda weird, but that may be why the box also includes a pair of flimsy headphones—so nobody will be able to hear what you're really doing in the office.

Your nocturnal wanderings are also liable to turn up some brief nudity, cuss words, and the occasional act of senseless violence.

Midnight Stranger isn't perfect, but it offers an intriguing glimpse of how multimedia games can move beyond glorified cartoons. The game can be gritty, frustrating, and sometimes just plain weird, but it delivers enough intrigue and hidden surprises to keep anyone interested.

Midnight Stranger
Gazelle Technologies
800-237-6675

Platform: Mac CD, Win CD
Requires: Macintosh-25Mhz 68030 Mac; 8MB RAM; 8-bit, 13-inch color monitor. Windows-386SX, 8MB RAM, Windows 3.1, Super VGA, Sound Blaster.
List Price: $59.95

GAME PLAY:	★ ★ ★
GETTING STARTED:	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
GRAPHICS:	★ ★
SOUND CHECK:	★ ★ ★ ★
VALUE:	★ ★ ★ ★

A walk on the wild side of a nocturnal urban environment. The right touch will lead you to sensual pleasures. Play it wrong and you'll be chewed up and spit out.

TIP

• Try to avoid mood extremes. Act like a goody two-shoes too many times, and you'll get the brush-off. Develop a reputation for surliness, and you're liable to get bounced. • Don't bother trying to make amends with people you've angered. They've got good memories, and you're just wasting your time. • Don't sass the angry guy in the parking lot. Trust me.

PREVIEW

Magic Carpet

By Bill Meyer

DOS CD

Even when you're on the tail of an enemy wizard, the graphics remain realistic.

Got a Pentium? Been wondering when someone was going to build a game that really takes advantage of all that computing horsepower? Your wait is over. It's time to take a Magic Carpet ride.

Developed for Electronic Arts by British designer Bullfrog—creator of Syndicate, Theme Park, and Populous—Magic Carpet isn't some run-and-jump Prince of Persia look-alike. Even in its pre-release version, this intense and innovative game sends you flying over beautiful terrain that flows smoothly under you; serves up revolutionary graphics effects, such as rolling waves and watery reflections; incorporates fast-paced arcade mayhem; and leavens it all with an enchanting ancient Middle Eastern theme. Magic Carpet isn't a clone; it will spawn clones.

A dramatic introduction sets the scene. Background narration explains that a war is waging between the world's wizards over the remaining supplies of a life force known as manta. A cutting-edge cinematic scene depicts your first spin on the magic carpet that you inherited from your master—who perished in the onslaught of his own earthquake spell. You must collect manta of your own, or you will die as well.

Use the map to keep track of your location. It's also helpful for finding your castle.

Giant killer bees and flying worms are but a few of the deadly foes you will face.

You begin the game as a novice wizard sitting atop your flying carpet. As in a flight sim, you don't see yourself, only the advancing landscape, buildings, and turban-clad nomads scurrying about below. Steering with keyboard and mouse, you plunge effortlessly through crevices and valleys, dart alongside massive cliffs shrouded in mist, rise high above imposing castles, and race along the narrow paths of tent cities filled with villagers. Land forms and objects are not constructed from crude, hard polygons. Rather, the seamless landscape is smooth, fluid, and beautifully surreal.

You start with only two spells. The fire-ball spell wreaks havoc on competing wizards, innocent bystanders—even nearby forests. Shooting multiple fire balls into a group of trees sets blazes that jump from branch to branch and engulf enemy armies.

The second spell transforms the golden orbs of manta from your enemies into power for your spells. The more manta you collect, the more god-like you become. Twenty different spells that conjur everything from lightning storms to volcanoes to phantom armies eventually become available as you move through the game's 50 levels. An earthquake spell, for example, instantly splits massive tracks of land, creating jagged islands and open sea—killing everyone in the way.

One of the most visually impressive bits of magic—the castle spell—is critical to success in the game. Fire it into the sea or land, and ramparts instantly jut high into the air. These castles send out dazzling hot-air balloons to pick up your manta and increase your power. These spectacles, aided by evocative music and sound effects, give Magic Carpet a power that puts cutesy interpretations of ancient Babylon to shame. This is what Aladdin would be like if Arnold Schwarzenegger played the role. It's sick, but you'll love it.

Still not enough excitement for you? Then play Magic Carpet on a network against as many as seven human opponents in a battle that could split the world in two.

Magic Carpet is likely to have a magical effect on game enthusiasts—particularly Pentium owners. While Magic Carpet will run on a 486, the magic doesn't really hit full stride until you move up to Intel's finest. Don't have a Pentium yet? Magic Carpet may be the game that convinces you to buy one.

Magic Carpet
Electronic Arts
800-245-4525

Platform: DOS CD
List Price: $59.95

DOS
DOS CD
3DO

Quarantine

By Bill Meyer

It's 2047, and you're a cabbie in the once-beautiful city of Kemo. Unfortunately, Kemo has slipped off the most-desirable-places-to-live list. In fact, the government—which isn't big on social programs—has hired Omnicorp to turn the city into a high-security prison, leaving you and the rest of the horrified citizens at the mercy of the thugs.

You see, things started to get bad back in 2043, when Omnicorp introduced Hydergine 344, a neurodrug for eliminating criminal thoughts, into Kemo's water supply. This stuff wasn't fluoride: Bacteria in the water mixed with the drug and spawned a virus that turned regular folks into violent maniacs.

Now it's either escape from Kemo or die at the hands of five warring gangs. To escape from each of the five sections of the city—Core, Park, Old Kemo, Projects, and Wharf—you have to get an access password from one of 30 or so possible passengers. Some riders just want a lift to a club, while others expect you to perform gang hits and bombings. Fulfill their requests, and one of them just might help you get out alive.

Picking up Kemo's bizarre customers also earns you money for cab repairs, armor, and weapon upgrades. You won't have a chance of leaving the city without the best ordnance money can buy. But just because you're armed and armored is no excuse for wild driving. Reckless cabbies will waste their money on repairs instead of upgrades. Don't get too trigger-happy, either. While it's tempting to shoot or run down everyone in sight, gangs will be out for revenge if you kill their members.

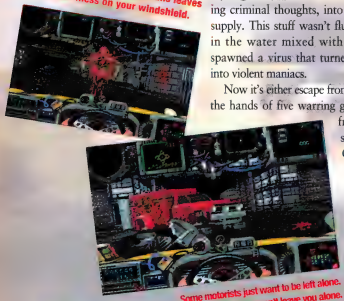
So while at first glance Quarantine looks like an excuse to mow down pedestrians and blast away at other vehicles, the real challenge is driving well, learning the city streets, and locating fares.

Don't expect another Doom—a game that's easy to learn but tough to master. Quarantine is difficult to learn and just as hard to master.

Quarantine does a poor job of building suspense, so its blood and gore feel somewhat contrived. In addition, developer, GameTek went for the humorous and absurd instead of the horrifying. The wacky touches often make the game feel more like bumper cars than *Road Warrior*.

Quarantine comes in both floppy and CD-ROM version, but only the CD-ROM has hot tracks from 11 Australian rock bands. But even without the sound track, the floppy version still lets you listen to nasty epithets, screams, gunfire, and glass-shattering collisions.

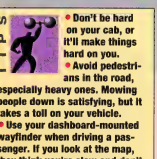
Once you learn how to get around Kemo, you'll find the game deep and satisfying. So if you're looking for a new twist on Doom, or if you identified with Snake Pliskin from the movie *Escape from New York*, be sure to check out Quarantine.



Running down pedestrians leaves a real mess on your windshield.

Some motorists just want to be left alone. Others won't leave you alone.

It's time to play torch-the-taxi with your handy flame thrower.



Tips

- **Don't be hard on your cab, or it'll make things hard on you.**
- **Avoid pedestrians in the road, especially heavy ones. Mowing people down is satisfying, but it takes a toll on your vehicle.**
- **Use your dashboard-mounted wayfinder when driving a passenger. If you look at the map, they think you're slow and don't pay you.**
- **If you've already crashed a couple of times or your patrons are particularly rude, give them a lethal ejection.**
- **Save your pennies to buy the Uzi for drive-by hits and the hood-mounted chain saw for wiping out multiple street attackers.**

Quarantine
GameTek
800-426-3835

Platform: DOS, DOS CD, 3DO
Requires: 286, 4MB RAM, MS-DOS 5.0, VGA
List Price: DOS, $69.99; DOS CD, $59.99; 3DO, $49.99

GAME PLAY:	★ ★ ★
GETTING STARTED:	★ ★ ★
GRAPHICS:	★ ★ ★
SOUND CHECK:	★ ★ ★
VALUE:	★ ★ ★

Quarantine's a solid—though not totally addictive—Doom-like game that provides exciting challenges once you master driving the cab.

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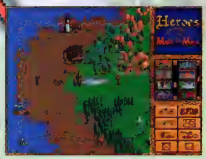
Heroes of Might & Magic

By Bryan Brandsal

DOS CD

Increase your ranks with various warriors, but make sure they all get along.

Four mighty kings have laid claim to a vast, newly discovered world. They've sent their most esteemed lords to conquer it. As one of these lords, you begin New World Computing's Heroes of Might & Magic with a single castle. From there you must travel across unknown lands, discover towns, engage magical foes, recruit friendly armies—even purchasing the services of other knights like yourself—in a bid to dominate the newfound territory.



Confrontations and treasures await at every turn in Heroes of Might & Magic.

Town Screen

The game's lush graphics look like beautiful medieval tapestries.

But these lands are far from ordinary: They're dotted with blazing volcanoes, frozen tundra, and miasmic swamps. And while Might & Magic veterans may recognize the colorful, dangerous, and sharply contrasting elements, this is not totally familiar territory for anyone. For one thing, Heroes of Might & Magic is not a role-playing game, it's a strategy game.

Yes, hidden treasures await explorers. The cities and villages are stuffed with exotic merchandise that beckons the wealthy adventurer. But there's a catch. The citizens are strapped for cash, so you'll have to build the shops yourself. You'll also have to collect quantities of eight valuable resources that are scattered throughout the land if you want the towns to supply you with seasonal payments. Of course, first you'll have to convince the towns' independent-minded governments to see things your way.

You don't have unlimited resources to do this, either, so you'll need to plan carefully. You could construct plenty of monster-producing habitats—such as Minotaur Mazes, Orc Huts, and Archer Ranges—to stock your armies, but it's not that simple. Some troop types don't get along with others, and each type has its strengths and weaknesses. And if you skip a couple of the regular payments, they'll all desert you with nary a second look.

But diversification raises its own questions. Do you add multilevel Wizard Towers, and stock up on powerful, one-use-only spells to crush the opposition, or do you create a Thieves' Guild that can produce spies to monitor the progress of your opponents? The choices are many, and there is no single route to victory.

One reason is because the lands appear differently every time you play. The towns, artifacts, resources, and perils are randomly redistributed with each new game. Even your opponents' personalities vary from game to game, making this one game that's fun to play again and again.

Whatever you do, one thing is sure: You'll really appreciate the colorful, detailed graphics lavished on Heroes of Might & Magic. The game screens have the flat but brilliant look of a medieval tapestry.

Despite a rash of new strategy games, it's safe to say that none approach the visual distinction of Heroes of Might & Magic. Playing it (over and over) is so rewarding you won't even notice that the next installment of the Might & Magic saga won't be ready for another year or so.

WIN!

- **Build a dock early in the game and take your ship on a grand tour around the continents and islands. You're certain to find some undefended resources and maybe even an artifact.**
- **Protect your holdings. Buy troops to garrison towns and castles so you won't lose them to the first attacking force after you leave.**
- **A few higher-level fighters will defeat plenty of lower-level ones—most of the time.**
- **In battle, use spells that freeze close-combat opponents in place, then have your missile throwers or spell-casting troops knock them off from a safe distance.**

Heroes of Might & Magic
New World Computing
800-325-8898

Platform: DOS CD
Requires: 386, 4MB RAM, DOS 5.0, Super VGA
List Price: $69.95

GAME PLAY:	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
GETTING STARTED:	★ ★ ★
GRAPHICS:	★ ★ ★ ★
SOUND CHECK:	★ ★ ★
VALUE:	★ ★ ★ ★ ★

This strategy-based fantasy conquest game sports incredible graphics, terrific game play, and great replayability.

Master of Magic

By Barry Brenesal

Master of Magic gives you more of everything—including more powerful and creative city screens than Master of Orion.

Do you believe in magic? You will, once you start playing MicroProse's Master of Magic, the fantasy-universe successor to the company's popular space-conquest game, *Master of Orion*.

This clever strategy game pits your missile, maneuver skills, and magical will against one to four other wizards as you wrestle for control of Arcanus. Your wizard can study any or all of five magical disciplines, each with its own set of spells. To actually use the spells, though, you must read the accompanying spell books carefully. (No pun, by gum!)

To reign supreme in this dual world, you may have to battle in two places at once!

Each wizard also possesses a smart city architect in one or more areas. The Aztec priest Tlaloc, for instance, is a warlord, and all his fighting units automatically possess a Veteran experience level. Scarred veterans of Master of Orion campaigns will recognize the heroes as a variation on the "special specialties" that made Orion so challenging. In Magic, however, you can choose from 210 spells to replace Orion's complement of 120 technological advances. The new game also gives you 14 wizards instead of 8 races. You can even create your own wizard and give him unusual advantages. Making him Charismatic, for example, improves all his interactions. Giving him artifice significantly lowers the cost of creating powerful artifacts.

Try as one of the established wizards or as your own mage with unique characteristics.

Once you've set your character, you establish rule, and conquer cities occupied by 14 different races, each with its own set of skills and limitations. Special buildings let you accumulate gold, make weapons, and increase your magical abilities. Afraid that Master won't take too kindly to your recent overthrow of his summer palace in Carnival Cruise Lines? Don't sweat it—you can still make amends. Master of Magic lets you trade spells, make pacts, bribe, and threaten like a voodoo U.N. ambassador.

Masters of Magic also features an unusual dual-world approach: All wizards operate concurrently in the planes of both Arcanus and Myrror. You can launch lethal attacks on either plane, with unique creatures and enchantments available on each world. Switching between worlds sometimes means changing from the hunter to the hunted. If you don't summon to one world in time, its ruler may use that strategy to walk tall in two worlds at once.

Establishing armies is as necessary as casting spells to win in Master of Magic. You can summon 42 kinds of magical monsters to fill the ranks of your powerful troops. Occasionally a hero will show up. These are some fighters are drawn from a stock of 14 personalities. And you can retain as many as six of them in your arsenal—assuming you can afford their price.

Master of Magic represents a big step forward from *Master of Orion*. The graphics are similar, and it still takes a certain investment of time and interest to get turned, but the new game offers far more in diplomacy, configure, confound, and conquer. Is this another must-play from MicroProse? Just gimme!

TIPS

- **Look for an energy node early in the game, then cast a magic spirit to occupy it. Nodes greatly intensify the magic power you accumulate in each turn.**
- **Remember, summoning and casting enchantments can take several turns, so always keep your cities protected against unforeseen attack. You don't want to be caught with your spell book down.**
- **Send out some low-level creatures early on to scout as much territory as possible.**
- **Save frequently. Important random events—both positive and negative—can strike at the beginning of any turn.**
- **Once you get familiar with game play, try on the persona of Sss'ra, a draconian warlock. He starts on Myrror with control over one of the special, more powerful races. He's a compelling character, though difficult to master.**

Master of Magic
MicroProse
800-879-7529

Platform: DOS
Requires: 386, 4MB RAM, DOS 5.0, VGA, mouse
List Price: $59.95

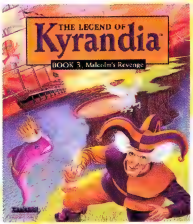
GAME PLAY:	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
GETTING STARTED:	★ ★
GRAPHICS:	★ ★ ★
SOUND CHECK:	★ ★ ★
VALUE:	★ ★ ★ ★ ★

This fantasy-world strategy game successor to *Master of Orion* surpasses the original.

He Who Laughs, Lasts.

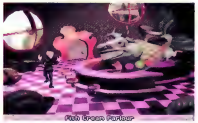
IN BOOK THREE OF the *Legend of Kyrandia*, you become Malcolm—the infamous Court Jester of Kyrandia. And you have one last chance to save your rude, misunderstood hide.

GO TO THE ENDS of the Earth armed with swimfins and an inflatable pool toy as you attempt to solve the murders behind the mad monarchy. But be careful, because your country despises you. The Underworld entices you. And pirates double-cross you. It's a fantasy world filled with magic—and the trick is to stay alive.



FEATURES

- CONTROL MALCOLM'S MISCHIEVOUS PERSONALITY and hilarious mouth with Westwood Studios' new interactive *Moodometer*. When conversing with Kyrandians, does it pay to be nice, normal or lie like crazy?
- ENTER OVER 80 WILD SCENES rendered in deliriously advanced 3-D graphics! Discover harder puzzles, more absurd magic and good and bad consciences that offer dubious advice.
- WITH OUR "NO-CLICK" INTERFACING, assess options by simply moving your mouse to the lower screen. The action's faster and the graphics are bigger.
- ALTHOUGH MALCOLM'S WARPED, our new *Supersound* is exceptionally clear. Along with lively music, you'll hear real Kyrandian sound effects.



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CyberJudas

By Barry Brenesal

CyberJudas, a remake of 1993's Shadow President global-intrigue simulation from Merit Software, goes far beyond repairing defects in the original.

Shadow President had unprecedented depth. It let you manage some 100 variables from the 1990 CIA World Factbook for each of the game's 150 nations. But the game itself was stiff, the cabinet of advisors dull and unhelpful, and the graphics mostly awful.

The new game adds great game play to its roots, creating one of the most challenging, innovative, and imaginative games to appear in a long time.

In fact, CyberJudas is three games, all using the same interface and simulation engine. In the first game, you play the President of the United States whose cabinet has been penetrated by a determined band of conspirators. They work quietly against you, trying to weaken your country by subverting negotiations with arms and peacekeeping efforts. They'll stop at nothing—not even the assassination of foreign heads of state—to take you down.

Simply finding the culprits takes enormous time and energy, but you must also quickly repair the damage they cause. Once you know their identities, you have to find a way to discredit them. Do you risk direct confrontations as each turncoat is revealed, pitting your battered public image against theirs? Or do you turn the tables on the traitors, laying traps that will damage their credibility? Better hurry: Election time is right around the corner.

The second game resembles the original Shadow President—an open-ended, remarkably accurate simulation of U.S. involvement in global affairs. You can start wars, build alliances, even become the world's peacemaker if you can convince the rest of humanity to go along with your plans.

Instant access to the 1992 CIA World Factbook lets you see who's on top, who's not, and who's willing to take one whom to get there.

CyberJudas's third game is modeled on real-world situations. Once again, you're fully in control, but now all cabinet members have their own large egos and personal agendas, so they bump heads frequently. Can you get them to work as a team?

The cabinet members' personality quirks change randomly from game to game, too, so you never know what you'll have to contend with next. When you decide that you've had enough and declare the game over, the program produces a summary sheet detailing your accomplishments, giving you a sense of how well you performed.

To bring this voyage into government paranoia shuddering to life, CyberJudas employs beautiful graphics and a moody sound track. You can't move through the oversized, darkly shadowed corridors of power and prestige without feeling just a little bit chillier.

Shadow President did a good job of simulating the vagaries of global diplomacy. CyberJudas is global diplomacy, and makes for a beautiful, tension-filled game.

CyberJudas
Merit Software
800-238-4277

Platform: DOS
Requires: 486, 4MB RAM, DOS 5.0, VGA, mouse
List Price: $79.95

GAME PLAY:	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
GETTING STARTED:	★ ★
GRAPHICS:	★ ★ ★ ★
SOUND CHECK:	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
VALUE:	★ ★ ★ ★ ★

This superb simulation of global diplomacy sports excellent graphics and a riveting overlay of international espionage.

HINT

- Every CyberJudas scenario includes three traitors. They won't betray you simultaneously, so concentrate on locating and disposing them one at a time.
- For a spot check on how your actions have affected another nation, take a glance at the CIA World Factbook. The game presents the country's current game profile next to its actual profile for comparison.

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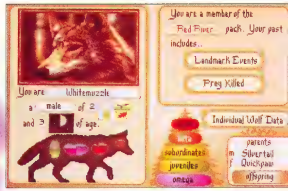
Wolf

By Joel Enos


You are a member of the Red River pack. Your past includes...
Landmark Events
Prey Killed
You are Whitemuzzle
a male of 2 and 3 of age.
Individual Wolf Data
Rate subordinates juveniles omegas
parents Silvertail Quickpaw
offspring

The Individual Wolf Data screen lets you choose your character for the scenarios.

You howl and sniff the crisp evening air, catching the faint scent of a rabbit to the east. It lies farther away than the carcass you smelled earlier, but a hunter is too close to the kill for you to risk an easy dinner. Your howls are suddenly answered by other wolves. Are they members of your own pack, or are they a rival group looking to push out the competition? Better think fast. You don't have much time...

Welcome to the eat-or-be-eaten world of Wolf, Sanctuary Woods' new role-playing/ simulation game that seamlessly combines learning and gaming to create a unique challenge. You take on the persona of a wolf in any of more than 40 scenarios, such as "Kill a hare" or "Find a mate." Each minidrama pits you against time, predators, and the elements.

Five of the wolves you can play currently reside in a wolf reserve near Seattle.

First, you need to get comfortable in your new skin and master the game's numerous keyboard combinations that control your animal instincts and senses—seeing, eating, sitting, and howling. When you begin to make your way through the forest, it's extremely important to pay attention to the details if you want to stay alive. Keep a careful eye on your vital signs (health, stomach, endurance, and heart) or you'll soon be a meal for another creature. You can't expect to have the strength to bring down a moose if you haven't slept in three nights or are parched with thirst.

If you lose your life, the game is over. You cannot begin again. Even a successful wolf will eventually die of old age, so the only way to continue in Wolf is to mate and live on reincarnated through your offspring. And mating is one of the hardest parts of the game, as wolves can mate only during a brief period of time each year, and both partners must be in perfect health. So be ready to have your pride bruised the first time you approach another wolf for that special moment and it runs away with a yelp.

Five of the game's characters are actual wolves that live in Wolf Haven, a nonprofit wolf reserve near Seattle. Wolf Haven contributed to the detailed background research and careful design that went into Wolf. A section at the end of the game explains how to get in touch with the organization for more information and to make donations.

Wolf's graphics, realistic simulation, and wide variety of options make it a unique gaming experience. You'll not only spend many happy hours playing, you might even learn something.

TIPS

- **Use all of your senses to avoid danger. There is no time to relax with man mucking about the place. Plus, wolves die quickly if deprived of food or water.**
- **Don't be afraid to eat carrion. Once you get more experience, start by hunting live beavers and rabbits until you are ready to tackle bigger prey. It is not easy for a beginner to bring down a moose solo.**
- **When you hear a plane or helicopter, run for cover. Use sight and sound to prevent you from running directly toward the danger.**
- **Be ready to make a boot disk. Wolf devours conventional memory.**

Much of the simulation's difficulty depends on how you set the variables in the settings menu.

Wolf
Sanctuary Woods
415-574-5525

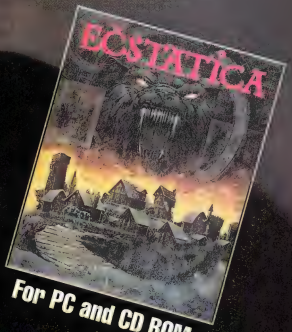
Platform: DOS CD, DOS
Requires: 386SX, 2MB RAM, DOS 6.0, VGA, sound card, mouse
List Price: $49.95

GAME PLAY:	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
GETTING STARTED:	★ ★ ★
GRAPHICS:	★ ★ ★ ★
SOUND CHECK:	★ ★ ★
VALUE:	★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Wolf's unique take on role-playing/simulation games puts it in a class by itself.

ECSTATICA

You'll have nightmares playing this game! Never before has such realistic gameplay been combined with such maddening adventure. Screams abound when a young girl's nightmares terrorize a town gone mad. Suddenly you're caught up in a role-playing horror story that features ellipsoid 3D technology for the ultimate in realism. Over 200 beautifully animated sequences, incredibly detailed 3-D backgrounds and a broad mixture of action and horror make this game a unique, cinematic experience.



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This title contains subject matter which may not be appropriate for audiences under 17

An Andrew Spencer game

PSYGNOSIS

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This game was developed by Andrew Spencer. Animation by Alain Maindron.

Shanghai II: Dragon's Eye

By Michael S. Lasky

Mahjongg is not a new game; it's been around for a couple thousand years. But Shanghai II: Dragon's Eye, Activision's spin-off of the classic Chinese tile game, brings to it the "dragon's breath" of life. This new Windows game supplies a graphically and aurally pleasing pair of challenges for both solitaire and challenge play.

More than a dozen sets of animated tiles help keep things interesting.

Your mission in the basic version of Shanghai II is a seemingly simple one: Remove all the tiles from the stack, a pair at a time. The stack is four tiles deep in some locations, so even *finding* a tile's mate can get tricky. And you can remove a tile only if at least one of its sides is free and there are no other tiles on top of it.

Ok, so it sounds like a brainless match-the-tiles game. But it gets even trickier and more maddening because there are four tiles in each set. If you lack patience and take the first pair you see, you may leave one or both of the others marooned forever in lower, uncovered levels.

To keep the game from becoming boring, you can choose from 12 tile "layouts" (the pattern in which the stacks are arranged) based upon the Chinese dogma of the Twelve Animals of Time. Or a layout construction set is also included with the game so that you can design your own Shanghai board. Four of these layouts are considered easy (Boar, Dragon, Rat, and Snake); five are rated advanced (Dog, Monkey, Ram, Rooster, and Shanghai), and four more rate at Master level (Horse, Ox, Rabbit, and Tiger).

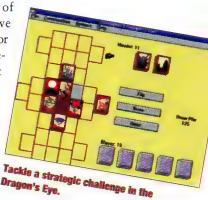
You can play Shanghai by yourself or in timed matches against an opponent, in which each of you tackles the same randomly set layout. The player who cleans the board faster wins. If the board can't be cleared (and many can't be), the player who removes the most tile pairs wins.

If you want even more competition, try the Dragon's Eye version of the game, which pits you against an opponent (computer or human). One player tries to build the cross-shaped Dragon board one level high—while building two levels high on the spaces on the Dragon's heart and limbs. The opponent, meanwhile, tries to remove all tiles from the heart and limb spaces. Success requires the skill and cunning of a chess player.

TIPS

- Check the board for triples: If three of the four tiles in a set are free, remove the pair that reveals the most matches.
- If all four matching tiles can be removed simultaneously, get them out of the way immediately.
- With the default layout, begin by trying to get rid of the far left and right tiles and the center top tiles.

Versions of Mahjongg have been available for years as shareware, but what separates Shanghai II from these is its whimsical animated tiles and sound effects. These extra touches add life to the game, but they also slow down play. You must wait until they finish before selecting the next set of tiles. Fortunately, you can turn off these options.



Tackle a strategic challenge in the Dragon's Eye.

If you like games that appear easy but require some brain cells to complete, this game is bound to shanghai you away for many hours of fun.

Shanghai
Activision
800-477-3650

Platform: Windows
Requires: 386/25, 4MB RAM, MS-DOS 5.0, Windows 3.1, VGA, mouse
List Price: $39.95

GAME PLAY:	★ ★ ★
GETTING STARTED:	★ ★ ★
GRAPHICS:	★ ★
SOUND CHECK:	★ ★ ★
VALUE:	★ ★ ★

A simple, classic—yet challenging—game has been revived with sparkling animation and sound, plus lots of options.

"THE PERFECT COMPUTER GAME"
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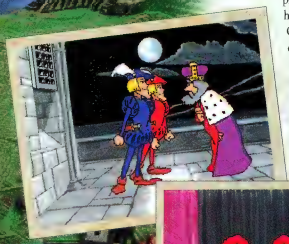
Win CD

Hodj 'n' Podj

By Ann M. Marcus

Ever since Rapunzel first appeared on the fairy tale Top 40, young men have fantasized about rescuing damsels in distress. In the age of political correctness, however, men are afraid to even ask a woman's name for fear of getting slapped with a sexual harassment suit.

Hodj 'n' Podj from Boffo Games takes you back to simpler times when young maidens were pleased as punch to be rescued by handsome, courageous knights. Okay, so there was a down side—dragons, plague, chastity belts—but that was a small price to pay. The game is an exquisitely illustrated, hilariously funny medieval romp that takes place in the usually peaceful kingdom of Po-Poree.



King Medlee pined for a male heir, but now prevails upon Hodj and Podj to find his twin daughters, Mish and Mosh, and return them safely.

Hodj and Podj are a pair of handsome young knaves who appear at the castle of King Medlee and Queen Mellony to rescue the fair twin princesses Mish and Mosh. To ease his own quest for the crown, the evil Salmagundi has imprisoned the maidens somewhere in the kingdom.

Hodj and Podj race against each other to track down and return the future queens to their distraught royal parents. You take on the role of one of these brave souls, while the computer or another player takes on the other. The first to return with the princesses will enjoy treasures from the royal vault. Not to mention the hand and heart of the princess of his choice and the chance to be crowned the king of the realm.

The game is jam-packed with visual and verbal puns. And the narration is reminiscent of a "Monty Python" skit. To find the missing maidens, Hodj and Podj set about finding clues that reveal the location of the captives and the tools necessary to release them—nutty items like the Beret of Invisibility, a bust of Francisco Franco, a Chisel of Death, and Leonardo da Vinci's autograph. You can purchase items at several stores throughout the kingdom using the gold crowns you accumulate along your sojourn.

The evil Salmagundi has been feeding Queen Mellony poisoned figs to keep her sterile.

The kingdom is divided into regions including the Mountains of Mirth, the Desert of Drollness, the Sea of Satire, and the Witty Woods. Each area has points of interest, such as the Warlock's Lair, the Crypt, the Tavern, and the Fish Market, where our heroes can engage in 20 amusing games. (You can also play the games independently of the adventure quest.)

Hodj 'n' Podj isn't quite perfect, though. You hear voices in the crowd on the sound track but you never see them on screen. And, in a point of royal protocol: When queens marry, their husbands become prince consorts, not kings. Other than these minor quibbles, Hodj 'n' Podj is a true delight.

Hodj 'n' Podj
Media Vision
800-845-5870

Platform: Win CD
Requires: 386/33, 4MB RAM, DOS 5.0, Windows 3.1, Super VGA, sound card
List Price: $79.95

GAME PLAY:	★ ★ ★ ★
GETTING STARTED:	★ ★ ★ ★
GRAPHICS:	★ ★ ★ ★
SOUND CHECK:	★ ★ ★ ★
VALUE:	★ ★ ★ ★

Hodj 'n' Podj is a charming medieval jaunt through an amusing kingdom for the sake of chivalry, fortune, and a good time.

TIPS

- To hasten your way from the northlands southward, use the skycars at the Boarding House.
- To solve the scrambled puzzles in the Crypt, start with the easy words first, like *a, of,* and *the.*
- The front door to the fish market is often locked—try the side door.

Clue

By Christine Grech

If you were an avid Clue player as a kid, you probably remember one character that everyone wanted to be. In our house, it was Miss Scarlet, but because I was the youngest of three girls, I usually had to settle for Mrs. Peacock. Now Philips Media's multimedia, multiplayer version of the whodunit board game gives CD-i owners a high-tech way to step into the shoes of any of the game's six intriguing suspects.

This murder-mystery adaptation requires Philips' optional Digital Video Cartridge, which provides full-screen views of the actors. Your investigation is no longer limited to verbal inquiries. Instead, you watch video clips of each statement, alibi, and observation of events. You can even see whether Col. Mustard had the lead pipe or Mrs. White was in the drawing room.

The game doesn't rely solely on video, however, it remains true to the original by digitally reproducing the playing board. When play begins, you see an animated representation of your character on the board, as well as an oversized die. The game's perspective changes when you move enough squares to enter one of the 12 rooms in the mansion.

Each room is a richly rendered environment in which you search for clues to the murderer's identity. As you move your cursor around the room, it changes to indicate a clue location. For example, you can zoom in on a desk drawer that contains a gun, inspect a mysterious stain on the carpet, or call up a video-clip flashback of events that occurred earlier in the room.

The ability to investigate the rooms in the mansion and to interrogate suspects adds layers of complexity to Clue. Players may find that evaluating all of the evidence makes this version of the game a great deal more challenging than the original. We even recommend that you take notes as you go. Of course, if you get stuck, the Butler can always provide a hint.

Another disadvantage to the game's complexity is that it moves more slowly. Players are tempted to take a good deal of time exploring each room instead of concentrating on winning the game. In addition, while the rooms are richly appointed, they tend to be underlighted, making it difficult to discern objects.

There are three different mysteries, each of which have four possible (and random) endings. That certainly makes the game enjoyable to replay, but much of the evidence remains the same, so it can get rather repetitious. The game is most fun when played with other people, which makes it a good bet for families with a CD-i machine.

Clue
Philips Home Entertainment
800-340-7888

Platform: CD-i
Requires: CD-i player with Digital Video Cartridge
List Price: $49.98

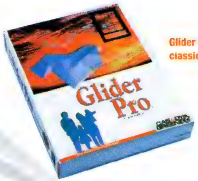
GAME PLAY:	★ ★ ★
GETTING STARTED:	★ ★ ★
GRAPHICS:	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
SOUND CHECK:	★ ★ ★
VALUE:	★ ★ ★

A complex, though sometimes plodding, CD-i whodunit that fans of the board game should investigate.

SLEUTH SAYER

- **When a suspect gives you an alibi, note which other characters were allegedly in the same rooms and at the times in question. On later turns, check these characters' alibis. When two of the three stories match, you'll know that the third suspect is probably the culprit, because only the murderer is allowed to lie.**
- **If you're playing with others and you need a hint from the butler, ask for a lie instead of the truth so that only you gain an advantage.**
- **Don't limit your questioning to other suspects; sometimes interviewing yourself can provide needed information—especially if you happen to be the killer.**
- **Don't be in a hurry to leave a room. Check it thoroughly to make sure you've found all the hidden clues—and secret passages.**
- **Look for pieces of evidence that don't make sense. Check the video flashbacks to see if there's a reason why the evidence should be there. If there isn't, you've found the murder room.**

Glider Pro



Glider Pro takes the Mac classic to a new level.

By Fredric Paul

No, it's not another flight simulator. It's not even close.

Instead, Glider is a simple-to-learn yet challenging mix of non-violent arcade and puzzle action. You navigate a paper airplane through a maze of rooms in a large house, grabbing lift from heating-vent "thermals," collecting prizes and power-ups, and avoiding all manner of stationary and moving obstacles. And while Glider Pro updates the game for Mac owners, a new Windows version of the previous Mac release, 1991's Glider 4.0, means that you're now likely to see Gliders on computers everywhere.

But while Windows users will enjoy Glider 4.0, Mac owners can revel in a number of key enhancements. Glider Pro lets your folded fuselage escape the house to soar over the great outdoors and explore fields, forests, and even secret underground locations. Other improvements include 256-color graphics, three times as many objects to avoid, a simpler interface, a slick two-player mode, an improved house editor, and an integrated tutorial.

Glider Pro is big as all outdoors.

Technological updates let the game work on both regular 68000-series Macintoshes and in native mode on Power Macs. If you have the computing power, Glider Pro can fill large-screen Macs with up to nine rooms at a time, making it easy to figure out where you want to go next.

Glider Pro's Demo House comes complete with instructions on what to do and what to look for, making it easy for beginners to get started. They'll soon be primed to tackle the big house and its 400 rooms.

If you make it through the whole game, you're still not necessarily done. The newly integrated and simplified house editor makes it easier than ever to create your own game. Previous Glider versions spawned a thriving online industry of player-created rooms and houses, and Glider Pro's new capabilities—including custom backgrounds—as well as the availability of a Windows version should boost this kind of activity. (Windows users can transfer Mac-built houses to use in Glider 4.0 with standard file-conversion utilities such as Apple File Exchange.)

The changes make the game more attractive than ever, but it remains a sort of friendly cartoon. And in keeping with its emphatically nonviolent approach, Glider Pro's new two-player mode is cooperative, not competitive. Instead of fighting for the highest score, players work together and share the rewards, earning points toward a single combined score. Controlling two gliders on the screen at one time is one of the nicest ways for two people to have fun on a computer. (If you're truly ambidextrous, try flying both gliders yourself—one with each hand!)

Glider Pro lets two players cooperate instead of compete.

Sure, using just four keys to pilot a cute little paper airplane around the house may not sound as exciting or as high-tech as blasting a rocket ship into space to defend the earth from murderous space aliens. But Glider Pro clearly demonstrates that fun comes in all shapes, sizes, and attitudes.

Glider Pro
Casady & Greene
800-359-4920

Platform: Mac, Windows (Glider 4.0 for Windows)
Requires: Mac Plus, System 7.0, 256 colors or 16 shades of gray
List Price: $49.95

GAME PLAY:	★ ★ ★ ★
GETTING STARTED:	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
GRAPHICS:	★ ★ ★
SOUND CHECK:	★ ★ ★
VALUE:	★ ★ ★

Glider Pro is simple, clever, addictive fun for men, women, boys, and girls—but it could use a little more sophistication.

TIPS

• **Not all the stuff in the house is dangerous. Rubber bands, batteries, and aluminum foil act as power-ups to let you shoot, scoot, and survive.** • **Some rooms include complex puzzles that require you to flip switches in a precise order to get where you want to go.** • **Check for hints and additional rooms in the online services or on the Internet (via Mosaic at URLhttp://shop.internet.net)** • **Glider supports numerous control devices, including keyboard, mouse, and joystick. Experiment with each to figure out which is best for your style of play.**

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PegLeg

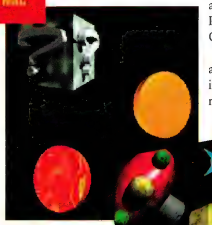
By Joy J. Ma

It takes quick reflexes and good peripheral vision to win.

What images does the word *pegleg* call to mind? Eye patches? Doubloons? Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum?

Think again. PegLeg, from Changeling Software, is an abstract shoot-'em-up arcade action game with nary a pirate in sight. This PegLeg plays like a demented cross between Crystal Crazy and Centipede.

As pilot of a Mach Z cruiser, you must blast away at anything that moves. The bad guys include squishies, marchers, flippers, and many more. Most of them float mindlessly across the screen—but not all of them.



The good guys.

The bad 'uns.

Annoying droppers only spew harmless traffic cones, but watch out for the munchers who follow on their heels. And be sure to destroy miners before they get a bead on you. Naturally, there are other critters that the manual doesn't mention, such as the shooter that minds its own business until you try to blast it.

To make things more interesting, your tiny ship is at the mercy of inertia. You tend to keep going in a straight line until you change direction. That can be a problem, since you can shoot in only one direction—up. You need limber fingers and remarkable peripheral vision to dodge the various dangers coming in from all directions, and at the higher levels bottom-seeking mines add a devious twist.

Luckily, there are some helpful items spinning through the void, too. The bouncing squares net you a hefty arsenal of plasma packets, phased matter pellets, and neutronium, which are all more effective than the standard fare. And don't forget to grab the floating gold coins for bonus points—you need them. If your point total falls below zero, you face a nasty green torpedo launcher intent on chasing you down.

TIPS

- **Grab the bouncing square and the gold coins immediately. You need all the help you can get.**
- **During a meteor storm, use goomers to slow the meteors; then shoot the sluggish critters to create a gold coin.**
- **Stay low on the screen until level 5 to keep the maximum distance between your ship and your targets.**
- **You can jump to level 20, but you'll have to earn your way into the higher levels.**

For some help in reducing the hordes, hit the Shift key to launch goomers—multiple-warhead homing bombs. Just be sure to stay out of range, because goomers are dumb. They'll seek anything, including you.

All this action is based around an obscure and largely unnecessary plot that casts you as a Mach Z Battalion cruiser pilot trying to keep your sector safe by blasting anything that moves. The silly story starts when General Spamcaplet pulls you from your safe little desk job at the interstellar refueling station and volunteers you for Operation PegLeg. Then you're commissioned with a brand-new Mach Z cruiser and thrown into space to defend Earth from hostile alien objects. Did anyone tell you that aliens had invaded when you joined the Navy? Noooooooo.

Playing on a 19-inch monitor gives you plenty of room to dodge but also increases the sensitivity of the Mach Z, making it more difficult to control. Conversely, playing on a smaller screen spells quick death since it increases the density-per-inch of the objects you must avoid. In a word, practice.

The game sounds are great, if simple, vividly evoking the action of bouncing, squelching, and exploding objects. The graphics are very cute, in a homicidal-3-D-confetti kind of way. And if your eyes can take it, try turning off the room lights to see what a real space war looks like.

PegLeg is an action sensation with a focused objective—destroy everything. As such, it's a must for everyone from seasoned space jockeys to gun-shy novices.

PegLeg
Changeling Software
800-769-2768

Platform: Mac
Requires: System 6.0.7, 2MB RAM
List Price: $39.95

GAME PLAY:	★ ★ ★ ★
GETTING STARTED:	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
GRAPHICS:	★ ★ ★
SOUND CHECK:	★ ★ ★
VALUE:	★ ★ ★ ★

PegLeg is a clean, spare, abstract action game. You'll want quick fingers and plenty of spare time.

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id SOFTWARE

GT Interactive Software

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Loadstar

PREVIEW

Sega CD

By Lawrence Neves

Look who's coming to dinner.

Just when you thought space was crowded enough, what with the Hubbell telescope and other NASA debris floating around, along comes Tully Bodine. Think of this disheveled "Outroller" as sort of an intergalactic Teamster—hauling his cosmic load and stopping at the greasiest diners to nosh.

Tully gets loaded at the docking bay.

The action takes place on a series of tracks that run through outer-space transit stations. Tully, rogue that he is, is illegally transporting camels through space. No, not the Camels you smoke, the ones with humps. Problem is, every cop in the galaxy is looking for him. On top of that, he's going thousands of miles over the speed limit, so expect the CHPs (cosmic highway patrollers) to hit the fan and give chase.

One wrong move in Loadstar, and you're toasted.

Tully Bodine, transgalactic Teamster, is on the move.

Rocket Science, Loadstar's developer, is trying to make it the speedy, shootin' standard for Sega CD games, but the preliminary version we saw doesn't get much farther than the Sewer. If you've ever played Sewer Shark, the first Sega CD game to use full-motion video, you've seen most of what Loadstar has to offer. Even Loadstar's graphics are only a notch above its earliest ancestor.

This simplistic shoot-and-scoot game doesn't ask a lot from your brain, but it does tax the thumbs. You simply race along the tracks, shooting at pesky police vehicles (which also shoot back), and making on-the-fly decisions about which track to take when there's a split. Let's hope Rocket Science puts landmarks in the final version to distinguish the infinitely similar tracks. You can go around in circles for hours before you actually get out of a level. Fortunately, you also have a display system to help you get your bearings and a horn to encourage vehicles to get out of your way.

Some well-done video sequences separate the action sequences. The affable Ned Beatty plays Francis Wompler, the monkey on Bodine's back and sheriff of the Lunar Federal Territory. You also converse with Mortimer, Bodine's happy face copilot, who shouts out warnings and dispenses advice like a grandmother. And like grandma's advice, it's usually a little too late.

The similarities between this game and Sewer Shark are such that Shark fans will find something to like here in Loadstar. You fly through similar areas, get similar online help from video-clip montages, and shoot at similar enemies just outside the range of action (although the rats in Sewer Shark are no match for the flying robots here).

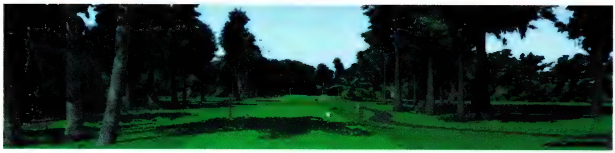
The mix of multiple-choice tracks, shooting action, and video clips makes for an entertaining time. But that's only if you don't expect a lot, because you won't get anything new. Hopefully, the PC version in the works will have more to offer.

Loadstar
Rocket Science Games
800-989-7625

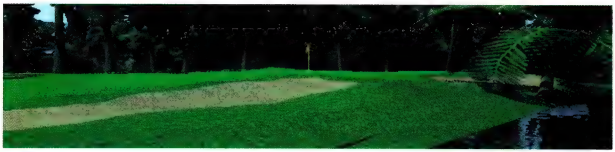
Platform: Sega CD
List Price: $69.99

TIPS

• Don't hesitate on the split rails of level 2, or you go straight into the wall. • Trouble lurks outside the tunnels, so slow down as you're entering one. • You hear the accident warning in plenty of time. Scan the split ahead of you and avoid it. • If Mortimer tells you that you've made a mistake in deciding which track to take, don't deviate at the next exit. Go all the way around in a circle, and try again. • Be wary of using the degausser or shield. They drain the Loadstar's energy.



AFTER PLAYING THESE HOLES,



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HYATT DORADO BEACH

Available for: IBM PC CD-ROM, Sega CD™ and 3DO™.

No these are not photos from our vacation in Dorado Beach, they're from the PC version of the game.

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Cannon Fodder

Each mission ends with a tribute to those who survived—and those who didn't.

By Christopher Lindquist

Ollie North ought to love Cannon Fodder. Heck, Bill Clinton might find that it rings a bell, too. This game has the perfect plot for politicos who like to play global cop: Send small groups of faceless GIs on missions around the world in an attempt to kill hostile troops, destroy enemy facilities, and rescue hostages—all while trying to avoid your own casualties. Sound like anything you've read on the front page lately?

If you are the least bit offended by militarism, violence (even in a cartoonish form), or racial stereotyping, this game is *not* for you. Cannon Fodder rejoices in its political incorrectness. Soldiers shoot wildly and scream in pain when hit. You can leave wounded dogfaces hollering or shoot 'em again and again for a series of rapid-fire shouts. You can kill the "natives" in grass skirts and sombreros, too, but they turn nasty when you do.

Cannon Fodder takes you into a wide variety of environments, from jungle to desert to arctic ice fields.

That said, how's the action? Actually, it's quite fun. Cannon Fodder isn't a full-blown military sim, nor is it as sophisticated a strategy game as something like Syndicate. Instead, the missions have a puzzle quality. (How do you get across that river without being blasted by the bazooka on the far shore?)

Take care of your loyal troops, or you'll watch the graveyard grow and grow.

The troops follow your mouse pointer like khaki-clad lemmings, shooting small arms whenever you click the right mouse button, and lobbing grenades and rockets (if you have them) when you click the right and left buttons together. All the running and shooting is arcade quality, which keeps things interesting. But there's more to this game than firepower. You have to use your wits, too.

You're limited to small groups of 15 or fewer soldiers for each mission, and the abilities of those troops are even more limited, so forget about complex maneuvers. Keep it simple. Your grunts are cute but mindless. If left alone, they'll continue to go where you last directed them and even shoot a bit to defend themselves. They'll also walk gleefully off cliffs, into quicksand, and under tanks if you don't stop them.

Once you get used to ordering around your little killers, you'll try to do everything you can to keep them alive. No matter how hard you try, though, you're bound to lose a few good men.

While you're likely to zip through the early going, the action builds quickly. It should take you many hours to work through all 24 multiphase missions. There will be mines to avoid, helicopters to destroy, and tanks to upend, but you'll do it. If you don't, you'll watch the graves slowly cover the cemetery hill after each mission. And that's something that should happen only in a game.

Cannon Fodder
Virgin Interactive Entertainment
800-874-4607

Platform: DOS, DOS CD
Requires: 386SX/20, 2MB RAM, MS-DOS 5.0, VGA, mouse
Street Price: $29.95

GAME PLAY:	★ ★ ★
GETTING STARTED:	★ ★ ★ ★
GRAPHICS:	★ ★ ★
SOUND CHECK:	★ ★ ★
VALUE:	★ ★ ★ ★

This click-and-shoot game isn't for the politically correct crowd, but it'll keep everyone else occupied for hours.

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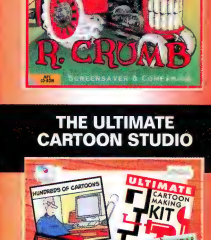

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PGA Tour Golf 486

By Bill Meyer

DOS CD

Tour pros discuss their love of golf, most-feared holes, and biggest wins.

Choose from three courses: Sawgrass, Summerlin, and River Highlands.

Feeling like one of the great unwashed and want a scrub? Flip on some televised golf. The soothing music, whispering announcers, sparkling brooks, and scenic fairways bring the country club right into your living room.

Electronic Arts shoots for that same pristine respectability in PGA Tour Golf 486. Announcers comment in hushed voices, option screens feature picturesque moats, well-mannered crowds celebrate birdie putts with polite applause, and soft guitar tones say good-bye to each hole.

PGA 486 definitely has the feel of televised golf—and unfortunately, the game play is just as sleepy as a Sunday afternoon golf broadcast, too.

The new Target Arc System displays the ideal flight of the ball before you swing.

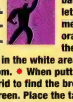
On the surface, PGA 486 looks a lot like Access Software's popular Links Pro/386. But your first swing demonstrates that looks can be deceiving. PGA 486 has its own swing design—and eliminates Links' annoying layer-at-a-time screen redraws after each stroke. PGA 486 also sports the snap-around camera from the original PGA Tour that lets you view the incoming ball after you make your shot—particularly striking on approach shots to the green.

Overall, PGA 486's stunning visuals represent a huge improvement over the original PGA Tour Golf. The courses are a hybrid of computer graphics and digitized photos from three PGA Tour courses—Summerlin, River Highlands, and Sawgrass. The nine pros—including such luminaries as Tom Kite, Craig Stradler, Fuzzy Zoeller, and Lee Janzen—are no longer animated sprites. Instead, each swing, chip, putt, and look of exasperation is portrayed by a digitized video sequence of the real golfer.

If all this seems too good to be true, it is—if you don't have the recommended hardware. Eight megabytes of RAM are practically a must. With only 4MB, the game resorts to low-res graphics and also loses the snap-around camera option. Without sufficient RAM, even a fast 486DX suffers through jerky animation and brutal load times between holes. On a Pentium with the recommended 8MB RAM, though, the game becomes a dream. Maybe EA should have called it PGA Tour Golf Pentium.

The proper hardware lets you revel in a wealth of little extras. There are four types of play—stroke, skins, match, and tournament. An intuitive hitting mechanism and a power meter are superimposed next to the player. And a new Target Arc System displays arc and ball spin before you swing.

Other treats include watching the ball's shadow dip and rise with the terrain, and seeing balls bounce high off cement paths instead of seeming to strike just another piece of fairway. PGA 486's cosmetic and design improvements really do make a difference. That is, they make a difference if you've got enough machine to take advantage of them.



- To hit the long ball off the tee, let the power meter reach the orange section at the top, and stop it in the white area at the bottom.
- When putting, use the grid to find the breaks in the green. Place the target just beyond the break and add a little extra power to your swing.
- When using backspin on approach shots, choose a club with enough power to make sure the ball rolls back toward the pin, not away from it.
- Don't worry about crushing your tee shots. Hit straight and true so you can nail an accurate approach shot. Watch Lee Janzen if you need pointers.

PGA Tour Golf 486
Electronic Arts
800-245-4525

Platform: DOS CD
Requires: 486SX/33, 4MB RAM, Super VGA
List Price: $59.95

GAME PLAY:	★ ★ ★
GETTING STARTED:	★ ★ ★ ★
GRAPHICS:	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
SOUND CHECK:	★ ★ ★ ★
VALUE:	★ ★ ★ ★

PGA Tour Golf 486 is today's best golf game. But its television-quality production values and intuitive hitting mechanism require the best hardware money can buy.

Electronic Entertainment

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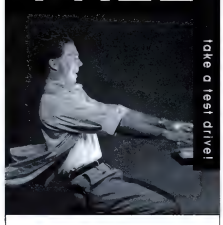

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The transition screens are as slick as the ice.

NHL Hockey '95

By Rick Raymo

Tape up your stick, chomp on your mouthguard, and adjust your cup—it's time to play NHL Hockey '95 from Electronic Arts. This PC CD-ROM brings you all the real NHL teams, all the actual players, and more game manager and statistical stuff than you can shake a Zamboni at.

Check the Scouting Report for the pregame numbers.

NHL '95 offers three ways to play: Skate a single Exhibition game between the clubs of your choice, choose League play and take your team through an entire 84-game season, or jump immediately into the Playoffs. You can play any mode either alone or against as many as 26 friends. Play together on a single computer, or import and export info about each team via floppy disk.

Check out the Instant Replay after a killer check or you blast one past the goalie.

You also get three ways to control the action: Play from the keyboard, with a standard joystick, or (best of all) with a four-button Gravis PC Gamepad.

So what's new in this latest version of NHL Hockey? Bust an opponent to the ice on a break and he gets to go one-on-one with your netminder for a penalty shot. There's great game art all over the place, too—from the front desk to the season schedule. Hot checking animations will make you oomph as Ulfie lays Oates into the boards. The new General Manager mode gives you the opportunity to trade and even create players.

The action's great, but stats freaks will have an absolute field day with NHL Hockey '95. The game gives you all the player statistics for the 1993-94 NHL regular season and the Stanley Cup Playoffs. Play a season of your own and you create mounds of new information, sorted any way you want. Line it up by Standings, Scoring, Defense, Penalty Killing, Power Play, Penalties, Points, Goals, Assists—the list goes on and on. Tired of looking at all that data on the screen? Output it to a text file and dump it to your printer so you can pore over it on paper.

NHL Hockey '95 is the best PC-based version of North America's best winter sport. That said, the Sega CD, Genesis, and Super Nintendo versions of the game are far superior to the PC version. The game systems seem to deliver better speed, crisper graphics (with the exception of the high-res transition screens in the computer version), and much more comfortable play with game-pads designed to do the job.

On the other hand, the computer shuts 'em out on statistical data and sound (it even includes music by the San Jose Sharks' organist). If you own a PC with a CD-ROM drive and have no intention of buying one of the mainstream home game systems, this is the hockey game to get—blocky pixelated graphics and all.

NHL Hockey '95
Electronic Arts
800-245-4525

Platform: DOS CD
Requires: 386/33, 4MB RAM, DOS 5.0, Super VGA
List Price: $59.95

GAME PLAY:	★ ★ ★ ★
GETTING STARTED:	★ ★
GRAPHICS:	★ ★ ★
SOUND CHECK:	★ ★ ★
VALUE:	★ ★ ★

The game decks do it better, but if you want to play hockey on your PC, this is the game to get.

TIPS

- **Use the One-Timer regularly to gain more twine bulges.**
- **In a faceoff, the ref does a minor flinch just before he drops the biscuit. That's the time to go for the puck.**
- **Remember, passing is always faster than skating.**
- **Shoot, shoot, shoot.**
- **Just like the real thing—pull your goalie when you're down a point or two with a minute or so remaining.**
- **Try a Drop Pass into a One-Timer. When starting out, play with a team like the Rangers (better numbers) and go to the lesser teams for greater challenge as you gain experience.**

Planet Soccer

By Andrew Miller

Planet Soccer, developed by France's Pathé Interactive, has a definite European flavor. But in an ironic reversal of real-world soccer, this import can't compete with homegrown products such as Electronic Arts' FIFA International Soccer. (See "Soccer: The Real Football," November 1994, page 104.)

On the plus side, Planet Soccer offers a unique approach and several different modes of play. You can engage in a match between any of more than 30 countries, enter a pre-configured tournament, custom-build a tournament, or face the ultimate challenge in World Cup mode. And unlike most other soccer games, Planet Soccer features the real-life rosters from the 1994 World Cup teams.

Choose teams from more than 30 countries.

TIPS

• Even the top-rated goal keepers have a weakness: Aim low and for the back post and you'll score against almost all of them. • If your opponent gets into your penalty area and you need to clear the ball, press your shot button to kick the ball out of trouble. • If you're coming right at the keeper, shoot the ball, and angle it away from him with your control button.

This ain't no wrestling match.

Adjust your line up to suit the opposition.

A good goalie is key to winning the cup.

The game's training mode is an ideal place to sharpen your skills. Other companies should take note.

The game also rates every player on every team in five categories, ranging from speed to ball-handling skills, so you can assess the strengths and weaknesses of each squad. After you choose a team, you select from five formations and pick the strategy that best fits your team's abilities. Once you're on the field, a diagram shows the location of every player to help you map out your strategy.

That all sounds great, but game play can be sluggish. The problem becomes especially acute when more than five players share the screen at one time. It also can take forever to complete a match. The slightest touch of an opposing player brings a referee's whistle and often a yellow card. Even more annoying, it seems to take forever between the referee's call and the free kick. And don't try to play this game with a joystick or mouse—you'll need a gamepad for adequate control.

Planet Soccer's graphics are its strongest asset. The unique on-the-field perspective puts you right in the middle of the action. This is a refreshing change from most soccer games, which offer only overhead or side views. And the players themselves are nicely detailed. Their movements, especially sliding tackles and diving saves, are as authentic as those in any soccer game you can buy.

Unfortunately, Pathé Interactive forgot to pay as close attention to the crowd, the goals, and the rest of the field. And while the digitized grunts and groans of the players are decent, the crowd noise sounds more like radio static than the rhythmic chanting you'd hear at a real game.

Planet Soccer has its share of good points, but it remains an average game in a field blessed with some strong contenders. If Planet Soccer were a movie, I'd wait for the video.

Planet Soccer
I-Motion
800-443-3386

Platform: DOS
Requires: 386DX/25, 4MB RAM, DOS 5.0, VGA, mouse
List Price: $49.95

GAME PLAY:	★ ★ ★
GETTING STARTED:	★ ★
GRAPHICS:	★ ★ ★
SOUND CHECK:	★ ★ ★
VALUE:	★ ★

Planet Soccer looks and plays OK, but it can't stand up to the competition, such as Electronic Arts' *FIFA International* Soccer.

By Ann M. Marcus

Faster Is Always Better

Everybody always wants to go faster. From carnival rides to computer chips, we have an unquenchable need for speed.

CD-ROM drives are no exception. So-called single-speed drives, which spin at the same rate as audio CD players, spew out data at 150 kilobytes per second (KB/sec), not fast enough to seamlessly run today's high-powered video and animation-based games and titles. The standard just a few years ago, single-speed drives today have pretty much disappeared from the market.

The new standard calls for so-called double-speed (2x) drives, which spin twice as fast, and spew streaming data at 300 KB/sec. The rise of a mass market has sent double-speed drive prices tumbling close to $100. But even double-speed CD-ROM drives can't deliver full-screen, flicker-free video clips without help.

If you want real fast action, silky smooth animation, and jolt-free video, you need a quadruple-speed (4x) drive. Quad-speed drives deliver data at around 600 KB/sec, four times as fast as single-speed drives. That means noticeably bigger video windows and smoother playback.

Just keep in mind that double- and quad-speed drives deliver their benefits on only half of the CD-ROM equation. Their higher throughput delivers more bits, but they don't necessarily access or find the bits any faster, so games and multimedia titles that spend a lot of time searching for data on the disc won't show much improvement.

Also remember that specs are general guidelines. Just how much extra performance you'll see depends on the titles and games you play.

Unfortunately, most CD-ROM titles were written to support only single-speed or sometimes double-speed drives. So even video-intensive titles may not run any better on a quad-speed drive. Fortunately, a few pioneering games—including Access Software's Under a Killing Moon, Origin Systems' Wing Commander III, and Trilobyte's sequel to The 7th Guest, called The 11th Hour—are taking advantage of the extra performance. Most titles and games are likely to follow suit soon.

With the right title, you'll notice the quad-speed difference right away, but you'll also notice the difference in your wallet. Quad-speed drives still list for about $650, although careful shopping should turn one up for less than $550.

Though somewhat similar, all quad-speed CD-ROM drives are not created equal. Most quad-speed drives come in both external and internal models and can be purchased as stand-alone equipment or as part of a multimedia upgrade kit. External drives are slightly more expensive (about $100 extra) and often hold the disc in a special caddy. They also tend to use a Small Computer Systems Interface (SCSI) card as the controller. SCSI connections let you "daisy-chain" several devices from a single card and make it easy to adapt a drive for either a PC or a Macintosh. Some systems bundle the SCSI connection with the drive, but most require PC owners to shell out an additional $50 to $100 for the SCSI hookup. Internal drives can be trickier to install, especially when it comes to hooking the drive to the sound card and getting it all to work. But they take up less desk space and don't require their own AC outlet.

Buying your quad-speed CD-ROM drive as part of a multimedia upgrade kit gives you all the equipment you'll need at one time—usually including a number of CD-ROM titles—as well as comprehensive instructions and a single source for technical support.

To point out the differences, we checked out four top contenders: Plextor's outboard PX-4SCH, Toshiba's TXM3601E1 external unit, the external NEC MultiSpin 4X Pro, and TEAC's internal SuperQuad.

All the drives met or exceeded the manufacturers' claims of quad-speed (600 KB/sec.) throughput, so we focused on other criteria. We evaluated each drive on ease of installation and clarity of instructions. We checked for front-panel headphone jacks as well as volume and audio controls like those on an audio CD player. To check on real-world multimedia performance, we loaded Microsoft Cinemania and measured how long the drive took to find the films that met our search criteria "Stewart or Monroe or Brando and (Heat not Wonderful or Dennis)"—*The Big Heat, The Godfather, In The Heat Of The Night, The Alien Season, The Man, and Patriot Games.* Finally, we compared the size of each drive's onboard cache, which holds data from the disc until the PC is ready for it.

Plextor PX-4SCH

The Plextor PX-4SCH drive lies for top honors with the Toshiba by aiming its features and service style at consumers, not businesspeople. The drive is easy to install, thanks to an extremely well-written manual. The trouble-shooting section, which we never needed, is truly comprehensive, with page after page of possible problems and suggested solutions.

On the technical side, the Plextor has a full megabyte of cache and features a front-panel

volume control and headphone jack. It was fastest (8 seconds) in returning the list of films from our Cinemania search, even though the company claims an access speed of only 220ms (70ms slower than Toshiba states for its drive). There is a $60 charge for the SCSI interface and software drivers.

You can even call Plextor's technical support toll free. The Plextor drive is also available from Educational Services under the MediaTech brand name.

Product Name: PX-45CH
Company Name: Plextor
Phone: 800-886-3935
Platform: PC/Mac
List Price: $589 external, $489 internal

Toshiba TXM3501E1

Living up to Toshiba's high-performance reputation, the TXM3501E1 didn't disappoint. This lightning-fast drive may be light on cost, but the solidly constructed box weighs as much as a small planet.

The installation is generally straightforward but dogged by some minor annoyances. We found it a chore to attach the power cord, and getting the caddy to click into the drive was a bit tricky. The manual was terse and technical and lacked a quick-start section.

Once we finished the installation and fired up the drive, things improved markedly. In our Cinemania test, the Toshiba returned the matching list of films in a respectable 10 seconds. Toshiba claims a swift 150ms access time, far faster than any other drive we tested. The drive also comes with 256KB of cache memory and sports a volume dial and a headphone jack on the front panel. Expect to shell our an additional $80 (Mac) to $175 (PC) if you need a SCSI interface for your system.

Product Name: TXM3501E1
Company Name: Toshiba America Information Systems
Phone: 714-457-0777
Platform: PC/Mac
List Price: $600 external, $470 internal

NEC MultiSpin 4X Pro

NEC's products are known for their fit and finish as much as for their mechanical quality. The NEC MultiSpin 4X Pro has great industrial design and handy controls for volume and audio adjustments on the front panel. The connectors and power cords attached easily, and the drive spun into action immediately.

The 4X Pro is reportedly the fastest of NEC's quad-speed CD-ROM drive line, and it's also the most expensive at almost $700. But although the drive is rated at a 180ms access time, it was the slowest drive in out Cinemania retrieval test, taking an average of 22 seconds to retrieve the list. NEC claims better performance when you match the drive with the company's own SCSI card, which costs an additional $99.

NEC helps compensate for slow performance with quick and friendly service and toll-free technical support. And the drive's manual is well thought out and easy to understand, with simple and clear illustrations.

NEC makes two other quad-speed drives—the 4Xi (internal) and the 4Xe (external). The company claims that these units have access speeds of 220ms. You can buy the 4Xi and 4Xe by themselves ($415 and $515, respectively) or as part of a kit that includes the SCSI adapter card and Microsoft's Encarta encyclopedia ($495 and $595, respectively).

Product Name: MultiSpin 4X Pro
Company Name: NEC Technologies
Phone: 800-632-4636
Platform: PC/Mac
List price: $699

TEAC SuperQuad

The easy-to-install SuperQuad has everything you could ask for in an internal CD-ROM drive. The simple installation process is assisted by a helpful manual that highlights potential pitfalls and ways to avoid them.

The drive uses a proprietary interface that allows it to work with Sound Blaster or compatible sound cards without making you fuss with jumper cables and DIP switches. The SuperQuad spent 9 seconds retrieving the Cinemania film list, and TEAC claims that the drive has 195ms average access time.

Surprisingly, the least expensive way to buy the SuperQuad is in kit form. Both Diamond Multimedia and Megamedia Computer sell kits based on the SuperQuad that cost less than TEAC's $649 list price for the drive alone.

The Diamond Multimedia Kit 5000 bundles the TEAC drive with a 16-bit FM synthesis stereo sound card, a pair of barely adequate 2-watt speakers, and 30 software titles, including Myst, SimCity 2000, Where In The World Is Carmen Sandiego? and Compton's Interactive Encyclopedia.

Megamedia's Extreme Quad combines the TEAC drive with a MegaSound 16-bit FM synthesis sound card, another set of adequate speakers, and a shorter list of software titles—for about $100 less than Diamond's version. (Diamond Multimedia Kit 5000: Diamond Multimedia Systems; 408-736-2000; $599. Extreme Quad: Megamedia Computer; 800-634-2633; $489)

Product Name: SuperQuad
Company Name: TEAC America
Phone: 800-888-4923
Platform: PC
List Price: $649

By Christopher Lindquist

Inside MPEG

If you've been following multimedia for a while, you've probably run into the term MPEG more than once. You may have also noticed that the hype surrounding this video-compression technology is frenzied, in spite of sluggish sales of both the hardware necessary to display MPEG video and of the games and multimedia titles that use it.

The MPEG compression standard was established by the International Standards Organization's Motion Pictures Expert Group. It defines a way to compress video and synchronized audio up to 200 times—small enough for a CD-ROM drive to play it back full screen and at a full 24 frames per second. As much as 74 minutes of near-Super VHS–quality MPEG-compressed video can be packed onto a single disc that will play on a single-speed CD-ROM drive.

Despite a number of competing video-compression formats designed for computers, such as Intel's Indeo and Radius's Cinepak, MPEG enjoys the support of such companies as Panasonic, GoldStar, and Philips in 3DO and CD-i CD-ROM–based game consoles. Sigma Designs' ReelMagic cards for the PC use MPEG, as do new products from Creative Labs, RasterOps, and Jazz Multimedia. Even Apple is working on MPEG for its new 630-series Macintoshes.

This onslaught of MPEG products has helped reduce prices, too. Consumer VideoCD players that also play audio CDs are hitting the market for less than $300, and MPEG cards for PCs have dropped from more than $400 to around $200.

This consumer push has attracted the attention of content developers that are looking for a more mass-market buyer pool. As a result, there are currently dozens of MPEG-compressed VideoCD movies, and software companies such as ReadySoft and Infocom have released MPEG versions of their popular games Dragon's Lair and Return to Zork.

To understand what's going on behind the scenes when you see an MPEG image on your screen, read on.

How Big Is Video?

Uncompressed TV-quality video transmits at about 27 megabytes per second. That's 180 times the maximum speed of a single-speed CD-ROM drive. At that rate, 600MB CD-ROMs could hold only a measly 20 seconds' worth of images. Clearly, something had to be done to reduce the amount of video data.

Astronaut's MPEG Return to Zork

Cutting Corners

The first step in shrinking the video data is to lower the quality of the image. Decreasing resolution by a factor of four—from broadcast quality to close to Super VHS quality—helps a little, but it's still necessary to compress the video another 45 times. That's where MPEG comes in.

Back to the Future

MPEG derives its images from a limited number of complete frames—or intraframes—that dictate how the rest of the video will look. These *intraframes* occur only every dozen or so frames. The other frames consist of *predicted frames* that get their information from the images that precede them, and *bidirectionally predicted frames*, which are derived from either past or future frames. Predicted frames work for objects that are already on the screen, such as a ball moving from left to right. Bidirectionally predicted frames handle objects that are about to appear, such as a ball suddenly thrown across the screen.

Life on the Edge

MPEG is far from perfect. Because it works with 16-by-16 blocks of pixels, object edges can often appear blurry, blocky, or jagged unless the image is hand tuned. Cartoons, in particular, often reveal this shortcoming. The best way for software developers to produce great-looking MPEG titles is to take the time to tweak every frame, which takes considerable effort but results in a superior product.

ReadySoft's MPEG Dragon's Lair

Directionally Challenged

Current MPEG technology delivers maximum crunching power on video that contains consistent, predictable movement. Scenes with lots of objects moving in many directions at once, such as a school of sharks, often suffer from "artifacts" such as blurry, blocky spots in the image. MPEG also prefers that objects move in a straight line; thus rotating objects, such as Ferris wheels or windmills, can be troublesome. Future improvements in the compression technology will no doubt further reduce these artifacts.

Asymmetry for You and Me

One of the biggest advantages—and one of the biggest drawbacks—to MPEG is that it is an asymmetrical compression technique. That means it takes much more effort to compress MPEG video than to decompress it. That helps keep MPEG decompression hardware fairly inexpensive, but it also lifts MPEG compression out of reach for consumers who want to record their own MPEG movies.

How Does MPEG Work?

To store video efficiently, MPEG doesn't compress every single frame. Instead, it transmits only the differences between one frame and the next. For example, in a clip of a man giving a speech, only the area around his mouth and hands changes from frame to frame. The background and much of the rest of his body stay fairly constant, so MPEG doesn't store that extra information on the disc. MPEG also predicts where moving objects will go next based on their direction and speed. So instead of recompressing the whole picture of a baseball flying over the left-field fence, MPEG predicts where the ball will be in the next frame and saves only those pixels.

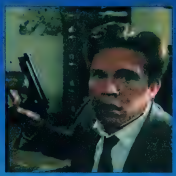
Crystal Dynamics' MPEG The Horde

Up the Sample

Most MPEG video is compressed at only 352-by-240-pixel resolution, which produces an image about half the size of a standard VGA screen. To get full-screen video, the decompression chip employs a technique called *upsampling*. This process doubles the number of pixels and looks at the pixels on either side of the newly produced pixel to decide what it should look like.

High-Tech Models

MPEG also uses a number of other techniques. Because the eye is more sensitive to brightness than color, MPEG deletes some subtle color information—without noticeably affecting picture quality. Similarly, it removes a small amount of detail that won't be noticeable to a viewer.



Time Warner's MPEG Flash Traffic

TECH SHOP

S.O.S.

Printer Problems,
Windows parity errors,
and unexpandable Macs.

Printer Problems

I'm looking to buy a printer, but I'm confused. I've seen ads for ink jets, lasers, and dot-matrix printers. How do I choose?
James Jones
Address withheld

Printers have come a long way since the old daisy-wheel days, when that noisy automated typewriter tap-danced under a huge, quasi-soundproof hood that looked like a neonatal incubator. Each of today's options has something to recommend it.

Dot-matrix printers are generally the least expensive, but they generate the lowest-quality output. They print using a series of tiny pins that hit the inked ribbon in a particular configuration to create each letter. The more pins, the sharper the text and graphics. Typically, dot-matrix printers come in 9-pin (often called near-letter-quality) or 24-pin (called letter-quality) models. Color models are also available. Two notes: Dot-matrix printers tend to be much louder than other nonimpact printers, and font selection can be severely limited compared with ink-jet and laser models.

Ink-jet printers are a terrific value. These devices spray ink onto the page using a series of small jets. Print speed (around three to four pages per minute, depending on the complexity of what you're printing) and reliability tend to be quite high, while print quality varies from little better than dot matrix to almost indistinguishable from laser. And you can find high-quality color ink-jet printers for less than $400.

Laser printers are still the Cadillac of printers. A computer-controlled laser electrostatically attaches tiny bits of toner directly to a rotating drum. The paper wraps around the drum, and the printer applies heat to fuse the toner onto the paper. Although prices for laser printers have been dropping, you will still pay around $500—much, much more if you want color (around $7,000!). In addition, laser printers are more expensive to operate than either dot-matrix or ink-jet printers. But you can expect exceptional print quality, especially for graphics and fancy fonts. Print speed is generally good, too, starting at around 4 pages per minute and climbing to 12 or more pages per minute (if you want to spend some dough).

Your best bet is to assess your needs, check your wallet, and go to a computer store to test out various models. Generally, any printer will run through a test sequence that shows off its speed and printing capabilities.

The Price of Parity

Every time I run Windows in 386 enhanced mode (by typing win from the *DOS command line), I get a memory parity error. When I run in standard mode, this never happens, but running Windows in standard mode is less than useless, and it tends to crash it a lot.*

I've tried all combinations of the command-line switches, and I've reconfigured my startup files ad nauseam. From everything I've read, this sounds like a memory-chip problem. Oddly, if I start Windows by using the WINHELP command, it will sometimes run flawlessly in enhanced mode. All tests I've run reveal no problems. Help!
Bob Smolka
Via America Online

Don't worry, Bob—you're not alone. Many Windows 3.1 users have also encountered the dreaded parity error. Unfortunately, parity errors, like so many things in life, are subject to the Gatesian Law, which states, "Thou Shalt Not Blame Microsoft Under Any Circumstances."

What's happening is that your computer's processor is always checking memory to make sure that everything is hunky-dory and that no bad bits are being fed to the system.

One way it does this is with a parity bit. The parity bit is like an on/off switch. If the bit is on when the processor thinks it should be off, a *nonmaskable interrupt* (NMI) leaps onto the scene to let the computer know an error could be in the making. In standard mode, Windows ignores the NMI, hands everything back to the system, and crashes (which may explain your standard-mode problems). Enhanced-mode Windows is much more sensitive: It picks up the NMI, says, "Oh! An NMI!" flashes you the error message—and then crashes.

Why does the parity error happen in Windows when everything else, including your memory-diagnostic utilities, indicates that memory checks out fine? Well, Microsoft says it's because nothing uses memory quite the same way Windows does (something DOS fans have known for years).

Unfortunately, there's no easy way to check your hardware for parity problems. You can try loading programs and drivers in a different order, or not loading them at all. They may be causing a conflict. That may explain why starting the system with WINHELP seems to solve the problem.

If that doesn't work, you may want to get a new RAM module with the same speed rating as your current memory and play "swap the SIMMs"—that is, systematically use it to replace each of your current SIMMs. Test Windows after each swap. If the parity error goes away, you've found your bad chip. If it doesn't, Microsoft suggests that the problem may reside in a faulty video card or

ILLUSTRATION BY DAVID PITON-ARTS

even a peevish power supply. A visit to a computer-repair center may be in order; it's likely to have the necessary parts on hand for testing.

Good luck.

Performa Woes

I recently purchased a Macintosh Performa 430. At first I was happy about my choice, but I soon was disappointed when I saw that there were better Macintoshes out there. Now I'm thinking of upgrading or trading in this Performa for another model.

So, three questions: How can I get in touch with a good trader? What kinds of upgrade options are available for a Performa 430? And, if I get a CD-ROM drive, is an internal one better than an external one?

PaulS45295
Via America Online

Three answers to help you find a better system (and you need one if you plan on doing much gaming or multimedia):

1. You can look in the yellow pages under Computers—Dealers—Used and call one. After you ask what they'll give you for your 430, try not to swallow your tongue when they tell you. Unless you need to sell the computer fast, you'll generally get a much better price if you sell it directly through a classified ad in your local paper or via an online service.

You can also call the Boston Computer Exchange (617-542-4414), a brokerage company that matches prospective buyers and sellers of used computers, as well as the publisher of a price index for these used systems. The company will tell you what the current going rate is for your particular machine.

2. Unfortunately, there aren't many ways to upgrade a 430. About all you can do is add more RAM (to a total of 10MB) and a CD-ROM drive (external only). The 430 was designed to be an easy-to-use home computer, not an expandable performance powerhouse.

3. Normally, I'd say get an internal drive; they don't take up desk space and they don't need a separate power cord. But as I said before, a Performa 430 can use only an external CD-ROM drive. There's just no room inside the system for the drive.

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How To Use the New Entertainment Software Rating System

What is the Entertainment Software Rating Board?

The ESRB is a newly created independent board that has, with the support of the industry, developed a standardized rating system for interactive entertainment products.

What the Ratings Do

The ESRB ratings are designed to give consumers information about what's in an interactive video or computer entertainment title and for which ages it's appropriate. They are not meant to tell you what to buy or rent or to serve as the only basis for choosing a product. In addition to the ratings, consumers should always consult product packaging for additional information about the product and should apply their own tastes and standards in making final purchase or rental decisions.

What to Look For

Ratings: Consumers should look on the front of the package for the ESRB rating symbol, which gives information about ages for which the product is appropriate.

Content Descriptors: In addition to the rating, consumers should check for important content information (also called "descriptors") in the black-and-white box on the back of the package. These content descriptors give more details about the product in terms of violence, sexual themes, language, and other areas that may concern some consumers. For example, the skill level that is necessary for young players to enjoy the product or animated depictions of violence. If there is no content information on the back of the package, the Rating Board believes that the product does not include content that must be highlighted.

The Five Rating Categories

Look for these ratings on the front of the package and, for more information, look for content descriptors on the back of the package.

Early Childhood

Titles rated "Early Childhood (EC)" are suitable for children ages three and older and do not contain any material that parents would find inappropriate. Check the content descriptors box on the back of the package to see if children need reading, computer, or other skills to fully enjoy these products.

Kids to Adult

Titles rated "Kids to Adult (K–A)" are suitable for persons ages six and older. These titles will appeal to people of many ages and tastes. They may contain minimal violence, some comic mischief (for example, slapstick comedy), or some crude language.

Teen

Titles rated "Teen (T)" are suitable for persons ages 13 and older. Titles in this category may contain violent content, profanity, and/or mild sexual themes.

Mature

Titles rated "Mature (M)" are suitable for persons ages 17 and older. These products may include more intense violence or profanity than products in the Teen category. In addition, these titles may also include mature sexual themes.

Adults Only

Titles rated "Adults Only (AO)" are suitable only for adults. These products may include graphic depictions of sex and/or violence. Adults Only products are not intended to be sold or rented to persons under the age of 18.

For more information on the rating system, please call the Entertainment Software Rating Board toll free at 1-800-771-3772.

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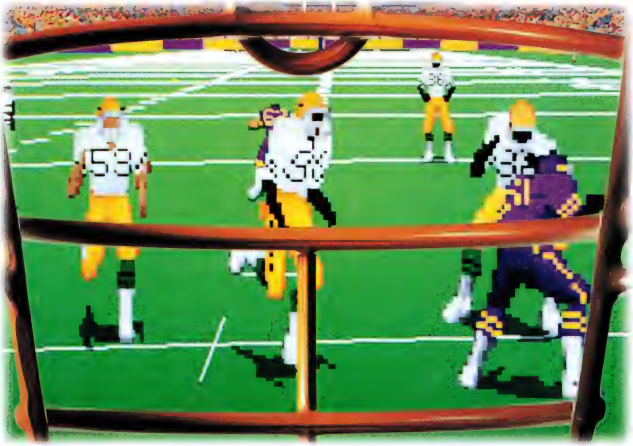

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Electronic Entertainment Products

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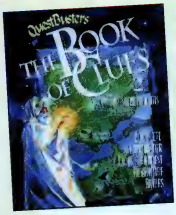

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Microsoft Golf 2 Authorized Guide

By: Corey Sandler

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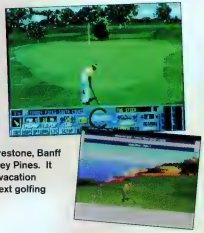

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The Top Ten Reference CD-ROMS, January 1996

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10. Marky Mark—All the Lyrics

QUIZ SHOW

Love 'em or hate 'em—you might as well know what goes into 'em.

Here are the official definitions of violence that underlie the new Recreational Software Advisory Council (RSAC) ratings for computer-game software. The folks who cooked up the rating system explicitly define different types of mayhem found in actual games and other media to make sure nothing is misinterpreted when software developers fill out rating questionnaires.

How well does your mind meld with the raters? Take our simple quiz. (*Note:* All possible responses are taken verbatim from official RSAC guidelines.)

1. Which of the following is NOT officially defined as "Blood and Gore"?

a) a sentient being is thrown into a tree chopper and is spewed out as hamburger

b) Wile E. Coyote is flattened or singed all over after an explosion

c) a sentient being loses an arm showing parts of the bone, oozing fluids, tendons, and veins

2. Which is NOT an example of "Gratuitous Violence"?

a) the eating of a dead body, reflecting cannibalism

b) "finishing moves" such as ripping out the spine in Mortal Kombat

c) the discovery of a body, poked full of holes, inside a torture machine such as an iron maiden

3. Which of the following is NOT considered "Aggressive Violence"?

a) Lex Luthor causing an earthquake through the use of hydrogen bombs

b) a fight in a hockey game

c) an earthquake

d) use of an item that shoots something potentially harmful, including rays, objects, projectiles, arrows, fluids, sounds, etc.

4. Which ONE of the following is not considered "human" beings but merely "sentient" beings?

a) zombies

b) elves

c) angels

d) Mickey Mouse

Answers: b, c, c, b

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Four correct Congratulations! You're a parent.
Three correct Congratulations! You're a corporate lawyer.
Two correct Stop playing games and write that term paper.
One correct Repeat after me: "Freddy Krueger is a fictitious character."
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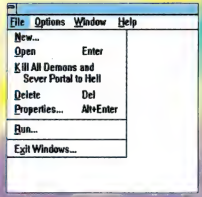

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